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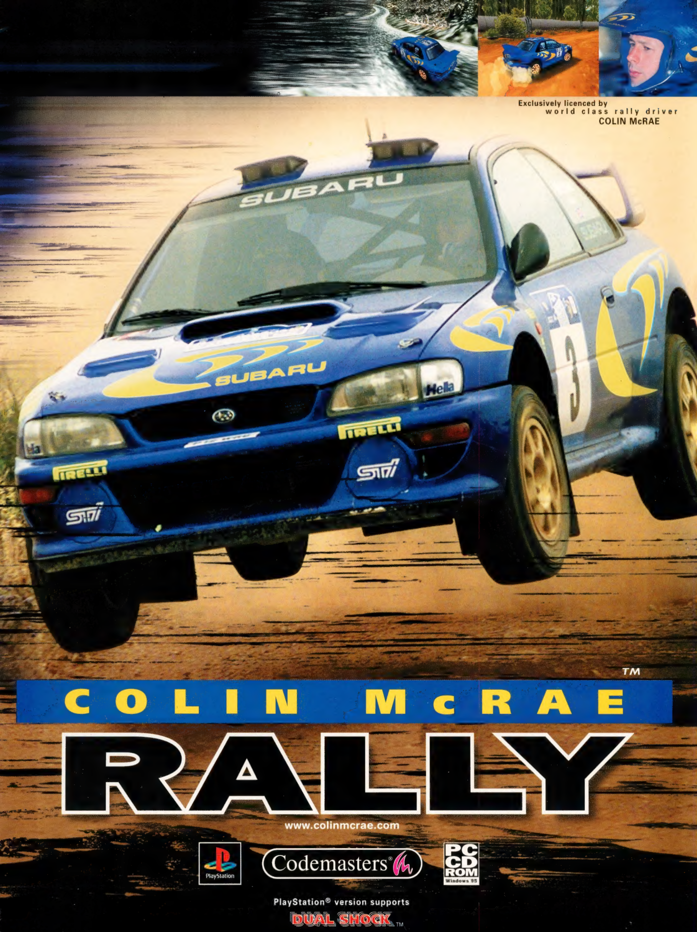
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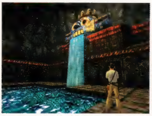

PC GAMER

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BEST SCRIPT

You play Andy. Your teacher hates you.
You're petrified of the dark.
Worse still, your best mate and faithful dog
Whisky is snatched away by the
Forces of Darkness. Nightmare.

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BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS

HEART OF DARKNESS
PLAY YOUR PART IN IT

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PC CD ROM

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PC GAMER

The UK's best selling PC games magazine

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LIFE BEGINS AT 59

Five years ago, the majority of PC games looked like the original *Duke Nukem*. Flat sprites hopped, skipped and jumped their way to obscurity in 16 colours. Today *Unreal* blazes away in millions of shades, wowing everyone with its flames, effects and sheer scale. By contrast, the past five years have seen PC GAMER's design remained largely unchanged.

Not any more.

Design-wise, issue 59 sees us break free from the past. Until now, changes have come and gone as frequently as the calendar has flicked on – there have been tweaks and modifications, but looking back at PC GAMER Issue One (December 1993) is akin to meeting a familiar school friend ten years on. This issue sees PC GAMER enter a new and, we think, infinitely more attractive phase.

Editorially, PC GAMER has been sharpened up and expanded to cover more issues. We've added an interview section, which we'll do our utmost to keep free of "What's your favourite game" questions, bulked out Diversions so it actually makes some sense in the greater scheme of things, and incorporated an on-line gaming section. We've also added over 30 more pages to keep you occupied while you lounge about on the beach.

This month we're able to debut with the definitive Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) report. The annual event, this year held in thunder-struck Atlanta, Georgia, is the premier industry get-together. Literally thousands of games were on the floor (and many more behind closed doors) all miraculously claiming to revolutionise something or other. This was, of course, utter twoddle for 99% of them, but you'll find the latest reports on the ones which *could* deliver over the next 75 pages.

In many ways, producing a magazine is like developing a game – the missed deadlines, false hopes, let-downs, breaking information, temptation to tweak every detail and, of course, you're only as good as your current issue. See you next month all being well...

James Flynn
Editor

SCOOP!

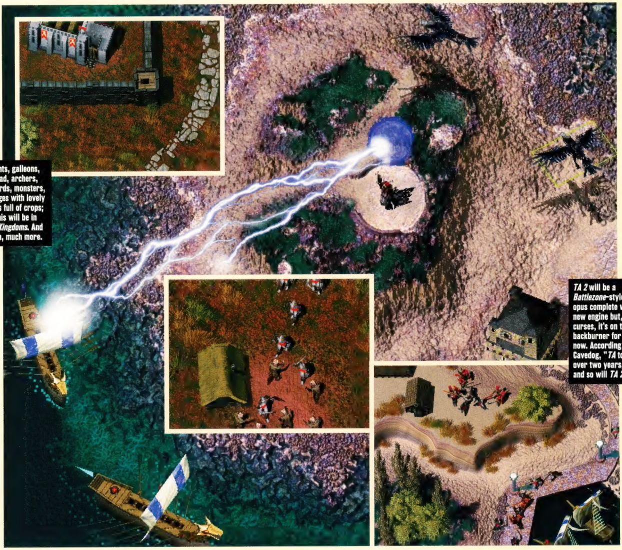
"Abounds with detail and enhanced

Your first look at...

TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS

Cavedog return, intent on adding substance to their pyrotechnic flash.

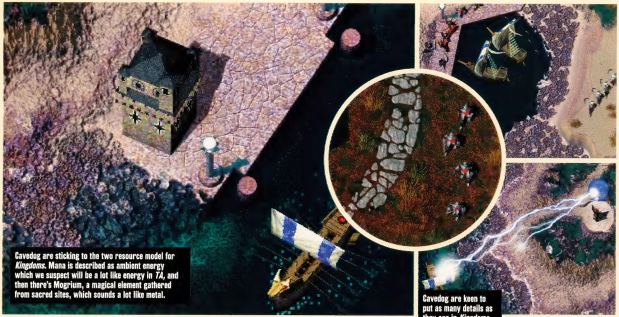
By MARK DONALD



Knights, galleons, undead, archers, wizards, monsters, villages with lovely fields full of crops; all this will be in *TA: Kingdoms*. And much, much more.

TA 2 will be a *Battlezone*-style 3D opus complete with new engine but, curses, it's on the backburner for now. According to Cavedog, "*TA* took over two years, and so will *TA 2*."

3D terrain that easily outclasses its glorious predecessor.”



Cavedog are sticking to the two resource model for *Kingdoms*. Mana is described as ambient energy which we suspect will be a lot like energy in *TA*, and then there's Mogrium, a magical element gathered from sacred sites, which sounds a lot like metal.

Cavedog are keen to put as many details as they can in *Kingdoms*. Little galleys have their own animated oars moving independently.

LAST year, everybody who was anybody was making a real-time strategy game. Even Liz Hurley was rumoured to be working on a "fast-paced combat simulation of unparalleled realism!" as all publishers known to man paraded an endless succession of *Red Alert* wannabes before a public hungry for more. Now, of course, Liz and the rest of the in-crowd have moved onto 3D shooters while the fading greats of strategy are left wearing the budget labels.

Significantly, despite this Gatling-like spray of titles, only a couple proved to be hits. The best shot in the arm the bloated old genre got was *Total Annihilation*, which wowed all with its incredibly exciting 3D graphics. Breathtakingly, *Total Annihilation* was Cavedog's first attempt at a 3D game. Not bad. So the question is: what will they do once they've had a bit of practice?

Total Annihilation: Kingdoms is the terse response. More helpfully, now they've topped *Red Alert*, Cavedog are going to try and nab *Warcraft II*'s scalp with a real-time strategy game that revels in medieval butchery and goatee-bearded blokes chucking arc lightning about. Yes, it is a 'Time of War' and ominous voice-overs as the Champions of Light battle to stop the Fell Minions of Evil from plunging the world into perpetual night. Aye thang yew.

The most exciting part of this rather exciting whole is that Cavedog are planning to stock *Kingdoms* with four entirely different sides that will boil down to four unique playing styles. It was the mirrored opposition that most disappointed about *Total Annihilation* and, since then, *Starcraft* has shown how much can be done with a diverse set of races.

As Clayton Kauzlaric of Cavedog admits, "*TA* had great technology and gameplay, but the content was just enough to hang a game on. As that was our first game, I think we had our priorities right. But now we have a foundation, a fan base and some existing technology, we can pile on more content and atmosphere."

AGAINST THE ELEMENTS

Much of that mysterious word "content" refers to Cavedog's desire to imbue *Kingdoms* with characterisation. So, expect a hoked-up story-line, trowelled-on cinematics and, more intriguingly, elemental races based on Earth, Air, Fire and Water. They divide, naturally enough, into Good and Evil camps, which has further implications for their preferred style of death-dealing. Kauzlaric expands: "The sides are partially distinguished by their use of magic. The lawful races are bound by a strict moral code that limits their sorcery to healing and building. They won't use it for giant city-levelling attacks because abuse of magic corrupts the user. Whereas anything goes with the Evil Ones. Their graveyards are empty 'cos there are zombies everywhere and they make massive use of offensive spells. That will make for an interesting balance between the two factions as one builds conventional siege weapons like catapults and ballistas, while the other hits back with giant monsters and devastating sorcery. And the Elements indicate the strong suit of each side."

There will, however, be fewer different units per army than in the previous game. Although there will be roughly the same number in total as in *TA*, this time they're divided between four powers instead of two. Fortunately, this means no room for all the pointless ones that cluttered up *TA*, and Cavedog's determination to perfect their art should result in far more distinctive units with definite uses. And, of course, the modular download system whereby new war machines are introduced via the Web will continue because everyone loves it.

Considering that no-one else has come close to matching *TA*'s engine, it only makes sense to use it again and so a refined version will form the basis for *Kingdoms*. Resplendent in 16bit colour, the early shots of *Kingdoms* abound with detail and enhanced 3D terrain that easily outclasses its glorious predecessor. As Kauzlaric points out, "There were so many things about *TA* that we wanted to improve, but when you're working on an existing game you're forced to use existing libraries and textures and so on. But now we've thrown all that out, and we're aiming for a cleaner, tighter look. We look at what we've done before as a dress rehearsal. This is where we really want to go."

All Cavedog have learned from the *TA* experience will be ploughed into how *Kingdoms* plays. For instance, it will be vital to take and hold high ground as archers and siege weapons have vastly exaggerated ranges on this key terrain. Last word to Kauzlaric: "We're a lot smarter now and have identified the bad practices which constrained *TA*. That was our first game. We're dying to show what we've learned since then."

TA: KINGDOMS WILL BE REGAL BECAUSE...

- **You'll be able to turn from race to race like a weather vane.**
- **It takes *TA's* polygonal engine into the realms of 16bit colour and hardware support.**
- **Which means exploding spells and chain lightning a go-go.**
- **You'll be able to muck about with the undead. (No, not that way.)**

Developer	Cavedog	**How complete**	60%
UK Publisher	GT	**Release Date**	Beginning 1999

"The twisting tornado is one of the most

Your first look at...

GIANTS

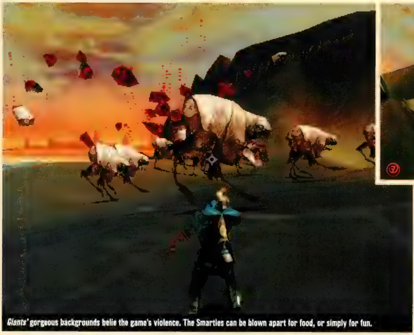
Planet Moon reveal their giant amongst games.

By MATTHEW PIERCE

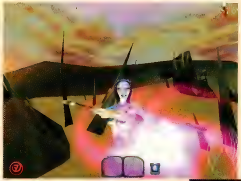
Kabuto's the Giant of the title. Given a chance he'd probably be as nice as Roald Dahl's BFG.

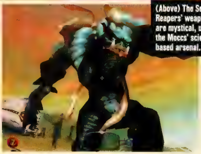
(Below) Like King Kong, but with better effects, Kabuto swipes at the flying Meccs.

impressive 'weapons' you're ever likely to have seen in a game."



Giants' gorgeous backgrounds belie the game's violence. The Smarties can be blown apart for food, or simply for fun.





(Above) The Sea Reapers' weapons are mystical, unlike the Meccs' science-based arsenal.

SHINY Entertainment, you may know, were responsible for the ground-breaking *MDK*. You probably don't know, however, that halfway through *MDK's* development, six of the team came up with an idea for a different game. A game called *Giants* that they instantly realised was far better, and that they would eventually leave the company to make themselves.

The six members now call themselves Planet Moon, and *Giants* (surely to the chagrin of Dave Perry) looks set to be one of the most auspicious debut games ever.

Trying to define *Giants* by reference to existing titles is difficult. Part shoot-'em-up (first or third person), part thinking man's strategy, it's tough to categorise by virtue of its highly eclectic constituent elements.

As Tim Williams, Creative Director of Planet Moon explains, the game is action-based more than anything else – yet the furious and ever-evolving gameplay is inextricably linked to the player's choices throughout the game.

"The game starts weighted heavily towards action with the strategy side building up over the 30-40 levels. This gives you time to build the arcade skills while still progressing through the game. As the strategy builds up, we also keep injecting new arcade elements, keeping the play fresh."

The Meccs and Reapers can be manipulated as a single unit or as a team of disciples.

DISTURBING THE PEACE

The game's premise – based on one of the better story-lines to feature in recent games – is that a lonely Giant living peacefully on an island becomes the centre of a war when two other factions – the sea-faring Reapers and the intergalactic Mecc warriors, are thrown together onto the same plot of land. The game – which was almost called Citizen Kabuto (after the Giant's name) – sees these three species fighting amongst themselves for supremacy of the island.

Being able to control any of these three, wildly different sides, it's unsurprising to find out each has its own distinct advantages and disadvantages including types of weaponry, strategies and, of course, the obvious discrepancy in numbers.

Kabuto, for instance – the largest character in the game – is extremely powerful and can swat enemies like flies, whereas the Meccs, being a violent space race, have nuclear weapons and an obvious advantage of numbers. Lastly, the Reapers (Siren-like beauties with a disturbing predilection for nudism) have boats with which they can escape the non-swimming Kabuto, as well as a command of the natural elements.

Enormously important for success, though, are the Smarties – two-legged harmless lumps who populate the island and act as food as well as worker drones.

As Williams explains, "The Smarties just want to build. There's a finite number wandering through each island, so it is vital to coax as many of them as you can to your base. They work together as a team, the more the merrier. If you treat them well, they will build you amazing gifts like the Reaper tornado. They will also help fortify and advance your base. Treat them badly and they'll get drunk and fight and might just make you a crap straw hat."

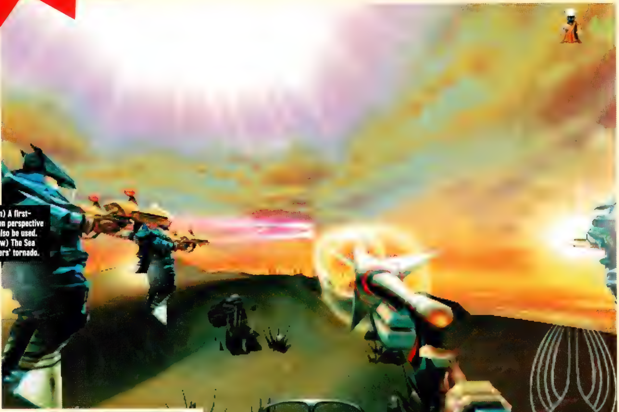
DEVASTATING EFFECTS

The number of different weapons on offer to the three sides is still being decided by Planet Moon, although the ones we have seen include the Reaper's tornado, Kabuto's trap-door (which he uses to ensnare passing opponents), and the Mecc's camouflage ambush, which, by using hilariously bushy costumes, makes them invisible to Kabuto's gaze.

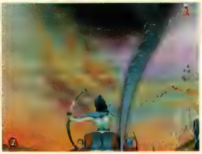
The tornado – with which the Sea Reapers can sweep the island, creating havoc – is one of the most impressive 'weapons' you're ever likely to have seen in a game. From a slow beginning the twister builds up in size and ferocity until it fills the screen, tossing small objects and creatures around its centre, until at its peak it disappears instantly, leaving the hapless victims to fall hundreds of feet to the island floor. Messy.

"There are many others," says Williams. "If you keep the Smarties happy, they'll repay you by creating more inventions and each one will garner you new strategies. For the Sea Reapers, the inventions will take the form of more mystical weapons and spells, while with the Meccs it'll be more technology based. Each race will be given its own inventions, but it will all still centre on action – you'll never find yourself founding a town called 'Boredom', where you plant a garden,

"The characters are stunningly animated."



(Main) A first-person perspective can also be used. (Below) The Sea Reapers' tornado.



trying to grow the biggest cabbage."

We're glad to hear it. As we're also glad to hear that your team-mates' AI (in the case of the Meccs and Reapers) will improve as each level is completed. Although only ever in control of one character, your single unit can divide up into multiple 'disciples' who are then able to build up their experience and weapons as well as transferring them to other islands.

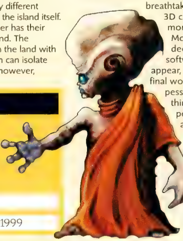
Level 4 sees your disciples stand by you and fire, but by Levels 10 and upwards, they are diving to the ground to avoid enemy fire, running behind trees and rocks for cover, and even flying around the enemy to get a better shot. As you progress through the game, you may also come across other, imprisoned members of your race who'll join you if you do the decent thing and set them free.

The most interesting thing about *Giants*, however, is the fact that the three races should be sufficiently distinct to make entirely different offensive strategies – and all using the island itself.

Williams says, "Each character has their own way of manipulating the island. The Reapers can cut channels through the land with their ships (like icebreakers) which can isolate Kabuto who can't swim. He can, however, scoop giant amounts of wet marsh to build mud walls and bridges. While the Meccs – well, they have nukes."

PARADISE ISLAND

The final word must go to the graphics, though, which unfortunately aren't done justice by static screenshots. All of the characters are stunningly animated, and the gorgeous landscapes, defined by their orange/yellow sunset palette, are breathtaking. Obviously it's all 3D card-enhanced at the moment, and Planet Moon haven't yet decided whether a software version will appear, although Williams' final words sound pretty pessimistic: "My current thinking is that those people who will have a very fast processor and might be able to handle a software version, will also be the same people that'll have good 3D cards." Perhaps now might be the time to start saving.



WHY *GIANTS* SHOULD BE MASSIVE...

- **Each of the three races offers a completely different challenge.**
- **The strategies available to you are as diverse as they are original.**
- **Incredibly lush backgrounds show off the superb animation perfectly.**
- **The graphics are among the best in the world.**

Developer	Planet Moon	**How Complete**	40%
UK Publisher	Interplay	**Release Date**	March 1999

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SCOOP!

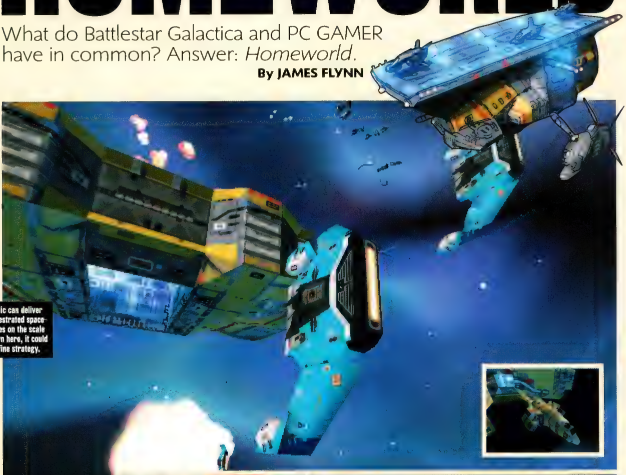
"Imagine *TIE Fighter's* combat applied to

Your first look at...

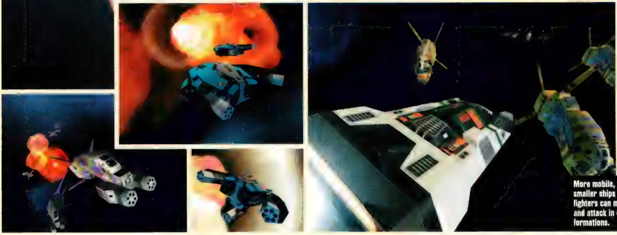
HOMEWORLD

What do Battlestar Galactica and PC GAMER have in common? Answer: *Homeworld*.

By JAMES FLYNN

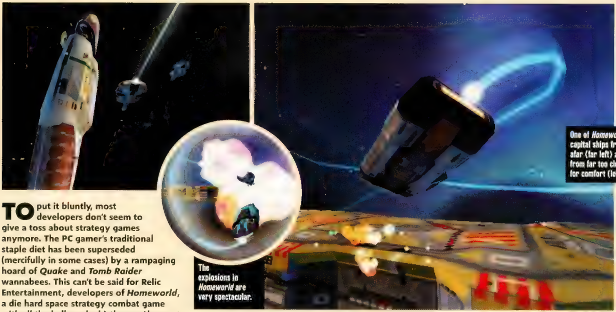


If Relic can deliver orchestrated space-battles on the scale shown here, it could redefine strategy.



More mobile, smaller ships like fighters can move and attack in close formations.

whole squadrons of ships, all swooping over each other...”



One of *Homeworld's* capital ships from afar (far left) and from far too close for comfort (left).

The explosions in *Homeworld* are very spectacular.

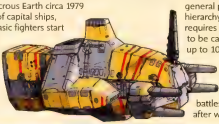
TO put it bluntly, most developers don't seem to give a toss about strategy games anymore. The PC gamer's traditional staple diet has been superseded (mercifully in some cases) by a rampaging hoard of *Quake* and *Tomb Raider* wannabees. This can't be said for Relic Entertainment, developers of *Homeworld*, a die hard space strategy combat game with all the bells and whistles you'd expect to see in a cutting edge 3D shooter.

"Actually, we didn't originally set out to create a strategy game," starts Relic Entertainment's CEO Alex Garden. "I just had this vision of a space game and how I wanted it to look... we just worked towards that for some time. As we did, it became apparent that the ideal form for the game to take was a real-time space strategy game." In an age where software publishers have to approve products before a penny is spent, this comes as somewhat of a surprise. However, looking at *Homeworld* it's clear why Sierra snapped up the rights to this technically wonderful title.

Visually, *Homeworld* combines elements that have tickled us in *I-War*, *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter*, *C&C* and *Myth*. It's an eclectic mix which, if combined correctly, should result in a truly original game. However, the story and game structure are reminiscent of Battlestar Galactica (sans comedy falling-over Cylons, smart-arse Dirk Benedict and ludicrous Earth circa 1979 episodes). Your fleet of capital ships, medical frigates and basic fighters start on the far side of the galaxy looking for your homeworld. Fourteen essential missions, each punctuated by FMV and optional secondary missions later, you should discover your own blue-green gem of a planet.

To arrive safely you will have to master the first real-time strategy game to take place completely in free 3D. Imagine *TIE Fighter's* combat applied to whole squadrons of ships, all swooping in over each other in order to gain maximum tactical effectiveness. You will be able to lay huge minefields, set up defensive cordons in six degrees of freedom, hide units in clouds above the plane of combat and send networks of sensors out to track enemy movements.

All this takes place in the finest space-set 3D we've ever seen, and that just about includes the gorgeous *I-War*. The action can be viewed in many ways, from a remote galactic perspective to one that's zoomed right in so that one ship occupies a full-screen. Without exception, the ships are all beautifully textured, packed with detail and, most importantly, reflect their function in size, armament, manoeuvrability and general presence in the hierarchy. All this 3D-ness requires a mass of physical data to be calculated every turn with up to 10,000 objects moving about at once. This capacity makes it possible to have a host of simultaneous battles, allowing for wave after wave of attacks.



WHY HOMEWORLD COULD RULE THE STARS...

- **It's the world's first true 3D strategy game.**
- **The setting, ships and explosions are quite beautiful.**
- **It has enough harvesting, combat and research to keep you happy and clappy.**
- **It could be the synergy of several of our favourite games.**

Developer	Relic	**How Complete**	70%
UK Publisher	Sierra	**Release Date**	December

SO WHERE'S THE STRATEGY?

"We've only been working on *Homeworld* for 11 months," says Garden. "All the physics are in place, virtually all the in-game art is done and the multi-player game is complete. We now have a full five months to script the single-player game and make sure everything is balanced."

The single-player game will be underpinned by what has become generically known as harvesting. When you start each mission you will have relatively little in the way of firepower – to construct more ships you will require additional resources, as will the research and development programme that will garner you new vessels to both protect your fleet and thrust into your opponents. There will be a single resource which occurs in different concentrations in asteroids, dust clouds, ship debris, etc. Protecting harvesters while they grab these is obviously vital and partly to fulfil this aim *Homeworld* will feature seven preset ship formations. These are a mixture of both attacking and defensive set-ups – the Sphere will send selected craft to surround and protect a ship, whereas the Claw is used to attack capital ships from all sides. This is not new, but if one of the formation is destroyed, the remainder will try to compensate for its loss by moving to fill the gap. If implemented correctly and balanced well, this could be *Homeworld's* greatest asset.

However, it's an asset that's up against some stiff competition. The surround sound with Doppler shift is wonderful, the explosions generated by Relic's proprietary tools take strategic destruction to a new level and the real-time lighting and inspired execution of 'fog of war' in 3D add another couple of strings to *Homeworld's* now laden bow.

Currently, *Homeworld's* single-player game is little more than an awe-inspiring technology demo. However, given that the team have come this far in so little time you'd have to give them the benefit of the doubt and expect them to bring this most ambitious strategy fest to juicy fruition by Christmas. And, besides, we won't have much of a choice when it comes to strategy games this Christmas... PCG

SCOOP!

"Each character, apart from trying to

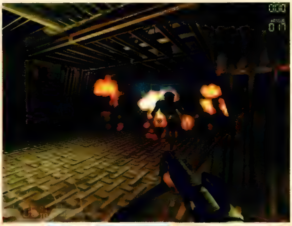
Your first look at...

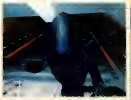
ALIENS VS PREDATOR

Aliens and Predators and Marines. You want some? You want some?

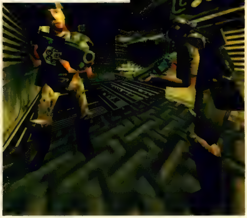
By MATTHEW PIERCE

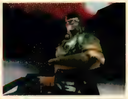
The aliens are essentially peace-loving beasts, goaded into fighting by the Predator's cruel "Why the long face?" taunts.





(Below) The alien's-eye view, just like in the films, gives the impression that old banana-head's been on the Special Brew.





(Above) The burly Marine strikes a forceful pose - disguising the fact that he's soiled his combats.

stay alive, also has to complete their own unique mission.”

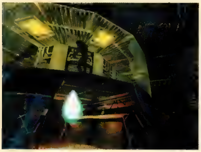
FAILING to include the third protagonist, Fox Interactive have made the title of their forthcoming first-person bloodbath something of a misnomer. Anal completists may need to call it *Aliens vs Predator vs Bloke*. Fox, however, recognised the unsuitability of this clumsy nomenclature, perhaps fearing the pedantry would harm sales of their inevitable tied-in plastic lunchboxes.

So, *Aliens vs Predator* it is then, cunningly sharing the same title as a game that, you may remember, caused ripples of excitement on Atari's long-deceased Jaguar console. But whereas that version (2D sprites and simplistic maps) owed a debt of gratitude to *Doom*, and now looks as primitive as Piltdown Man, developers Rebellion have moved with the times for the new version which evidently models itself on *Quake II*, with a wee bit of *Descent*-style topsy-turvyness grafted on for good measure.

THREE-WAY PLAY

Essentially, *AvP* is an all-out, three-way, 3D battle – the hunting ground being a typically tortuous network of Giger-esque organic corridors, tunnels and ducts, within which the three different races bicker amongst themselves. Each character – Alien, Predator and Marine – is sufficiently different from each other to warrant alternative strategies. Additionally, each character, apart from trying to stay alive, has to complete their own unique mission objectives.

Indeed, it's the underlying sub-plot of the four films (that of the corporate and the military interest in the aliens for biological warfare purposes) that provides the backdrop for the game. A sabotaged research facility is the catalyst for the carnage, with enhanced versions of the alien xenomorphs escaping, Predators breaking out of their captured scout ship, and the hapless Marine simply attempting to survive the ensuing fracas while trying to initiate the research facility's self-destruct mechanism.



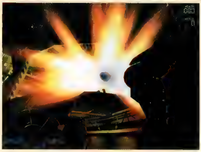
“Nuke 'em. It's the only way to be sure.” Unfortunately, sans atomic bombs, you'll have to rely on your flame-thrower. Bugger.

Having been cloaked by the impenetrable news blackout in which Fox often choose to smother their forthcoming releases, *AvP* was finally debuted on a stand at last month's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). After penetrating the security to get our hands on it, it's clear that not only is *AvP* in a far more advanced state than anyone thought, but that it's certain to be a real contender in the upcoming battle of the first-person shooters.

IT'S GAME OVER, MAN

Although not the toughest of characters, playing as the Marine looks to be by far the most involving experience. Blessed with the motion tracker (beautifully translated, and adding hugely to the whole nerve-wracking experience) and an image intensifier (to help see the Predator while it's in its translucent state), it's essential to locate weapons as quickly as possible. Then it's time to secure areas and seal ducts, all the time keeping an eye out for the eponymous significant others.

The motion tracker – which shows up other creatures as flashing dots on a 2D radar – is ambiguous as to their actual position in 3D, meaning aliens can travel overhead in ducts before falling down onto your head. And it's no good opening fire at close range, as their lethal blood sprays everywhere when hit. With literally hundreds of adversaries per level – packs of aliens often attack you en masse – the Marine's game is certainly the most tense of the three.



Less tense, but far faster, is the game played as the Alien. In this guise, you can scramble up the walls and onto the ceilings, before dropping down onto your unsuspecting quarry. To counterbalance your superior speed, you're forced to rely on close combat with tail, claws and acid saliva as your weapons. As the levels progress, however, the strength of the Alien increases steadily as it grows, until it becomes by far the most powerful character.

The booby prize for most unfashionable character falls, inevitably, to the Predator. In fact, the translation to *AvP* has left the Predator looking far better than it perhaps has the right to. The semi-transparent camouflage and infra-red vision it uses have been superbly implemented, while wrist-blades and a shoulder-mounted cannon provide the necessary firepower.

Characterisation may be the focal point, then, but fans of stunning visuals and intelligent level design appear to be well catered for too. *AvP*, like *Quake II*, is structured so that levels can be (and need to be) revisited in order to complete tasks. Hopefully, though, this won't mean traipsing around barren landscapes searching vainly for keys – a problem which blighted *Hexen II*.

Visuals are top-notch too. From the dark, wet interiors of the research base to the incredibly detailed texture-mapped polygons of the characters (the aliens in particular are superb), the ambience of the films has been recreated with laudable attention to detail. Thanks, in part, to the rich quality of the source material, *Aliens vs Predator* is shaping up to be one of the most atmospheric shooters around. And, coming after *Unreal's* release, that's really saying something. PCG

ALIENS VS PREDATOR SPITS ACID BECAUSE...

- **You can play as an Alien, a Marine or a Predator, allowing you to recreate those memorable movie moments whenever the fancy should take you.**
- **The characters all have different weapons, powers, and mission objectives.**
- **The engine's fast, smooth and contains superbly detailed models and textures.**

Developer	Rebellion	**How Complete**	60%
UK Publisher	Fox Interactive	**Release Date**	November

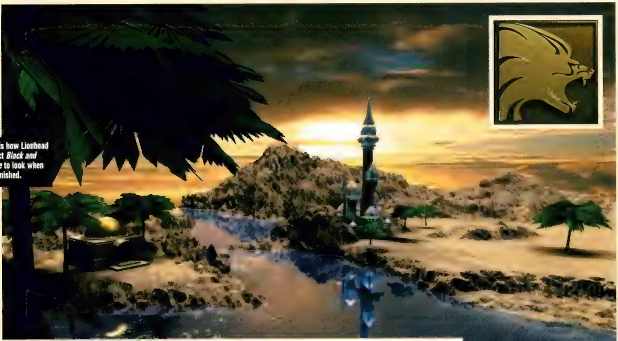
"The world you are in will contain an

Your first look at...

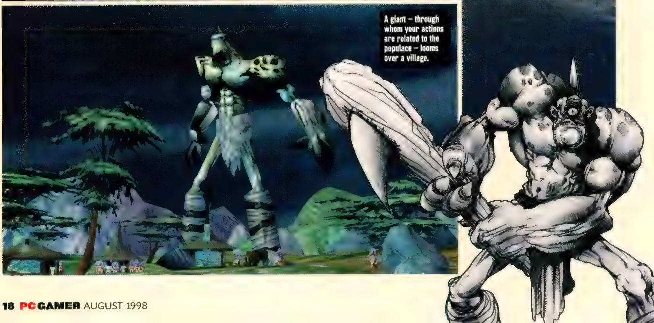
BLACK AND

Peter Molyneux returns to the god-sim genre he helped to create.

By JAMES FLYNN



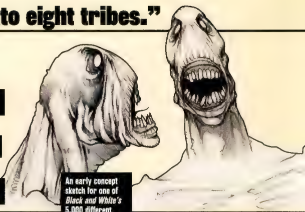
This is how Lionhead expect *Black and White* to look when it's finished.



A giant – through whom your actions are related to the populace – looms over a village.

amazing 5,000 characters divided into eight tribes.”

WHITE



An early concept sketch for one of *Black and White's* 5,000 different characters.

Black & White

“I DON’T want you to judge *Black and White* before I've finished describing it,” says an uncharacteristically apprehensive Peter Molyneux. Off he goes, and a couple of minutes later it's becoming clear why the founder of Bullfrog and the 20-man Lionhead Studios request this little luxury.

When *Black and White* appears next summer it will be unique. Upon starting, you will be inadvertently invading Nirvana and your very presence is destined to ruin the world. With an iron cold heart, the game will respond to how physically attuned you are to its ideals. It will quantify your emotions as you play, categorising your actions as various shades of good or evil – a unique gameplay issue and one being resolved by Tim Rance, a Cambridge philosophy graduate working at Lionhead. *Black and White* will feature no icons, and every person who plays it – even if they are identical twins – will see a different world evolve around their own personality and moods.

Still here? “This game has been a dream of mine for years,” explains Molyneux, finally shedding some light on the “secret project” he has been working on part-time since starting *Dungeon Keeper*. “It's easily the most ambitious game I've ever contemplated – you wouldn't believe what we're all trying to do.” Molyneux's dream is to recreate fantasies, however improbable they are, but *Black and White* marks an up-shift in ambition and technical requirements. “My games have gradually become more focused,” he explains. “From *Populous* to *Powermonger* to *Theme Park* to *Dungeon Keeper* – they've all tried to recreate a smaller area in more detail. With *Black and White*, though, we're aiming to spawn a massive world with more intricacies than ever.”

This is no easy task. The world you are on will contain an amazing 5,000 unique characters divided into eight different, traditional Earth tribes (Aztecs, Tibetans, etc.). Every one of these people has about 200 attributes – the final number is yet to be decided – governing their everyday existence and determining how they react to social events, to any climatic changes, to the environment and, most importantly, to you. You will take the role of a sorcerer who is essentially powerless but derives energy from being worshipped by the world's citizens. It is up to you to try and convert these little chaps, tribe by tribe, to your cause by whatever means necessary. Cajole them, threaten them, give them presents, bribe them, protect them or think of other strategies – this is where the game's heart lies, as you're competing with other sorcerers attempting to do likewise. He who recruits all the followers will rule supreme, but there are opposing tribal philosophies vying for their loyalty which will make this hard.

To determine your success, *every* single action you take (or do not take) will be analysed by the game and judged on the basis of being good or evil. From these decisions the world will evolve, Gaia-like, into a reflection of your own personality so, if you're cruel, your base will slowly morph into a dark citadel. Your actions are sent to the populace via spells and a single avatar-like giant whose appearance will also reflect your personality.

If you're still here, you'll probably realise *Black and White* is rather abstract. You must court the populace's affections, bring them round to your way of thinking and channel their collective power to your greater glory.

THE PETER PRINCIPLE

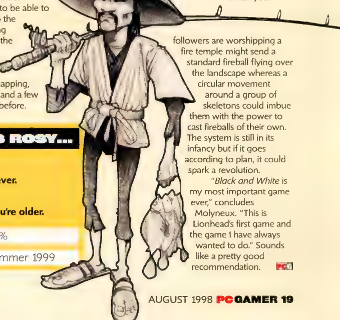
Molyneux's works (and Bullfrog's titles in general) have always been technically stunning (when the game has demanded it) and *Black and White* will take this to a new level. The world is currently under development but the plan is to be able to zoom in from space down to the smallest feature without losing detail. The engine can adjust the detail of the models depending on how far away they are. This will complement environment mapping, dynamically modelled water and a few other tricks we haven't seen before.

“For example,” a gesticulating Molyneux explains, “fogging is something everyone is doing now, but we've moved beyond that and into de-focusing the polygons in the background. When you look at a person the background behind them is almost unidentifiable – we can create superior effects faster by blurring polygons.”

However, for a game where characterisation is so vital, rigid polygons are not always enough. This is where some of the world's top technical coders – the underground Scandinavian demo fraternity – have been persuaded to help. They're developing a pixel distortion system that will give all the characters a fleshy, organic finish.

A final technical development might prove to be by far the most significant. Jonty Barnes, also ex-*Dungeon Keeper*, is working on a pattern recognition system to enable players to cast various spells with different effects based on the movements of the mouse. Pushing up when your followers are worshipping a fire temple might send a standard fireball flying over the landscape whereas a circular movement around a group of skeletons could imbue them with the power to cast fireballs of their own. The system is still in its infancy but if it goes according to plan, it could spark a revolution.

“*Black and White* is my most important game ever,” concludes Molyneux. “This is Lionhead's first game and the game I have always wanted to do.” Sounds like a pretty good recommendation.



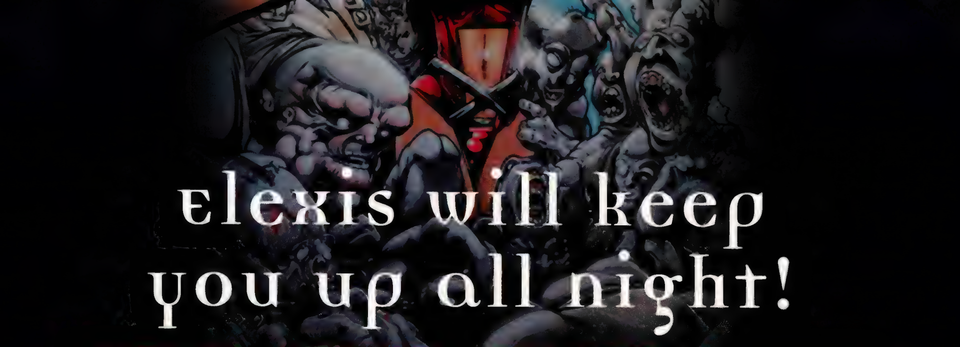
WHY *BLACK AND WHITE'S* FUTURE IS ROSY...

- **We've never seen anything like it before.**
- **Peter Molyneux is at the helm and determined to make it his best ever.**
- **The technology will make your eyes water.**
- **It will exercise your conscience like looking back at school when you're older.**

Developer	Lionhead	**How Complete**	35%
UK Publisher	EA	**Release Date**	Summer 1999

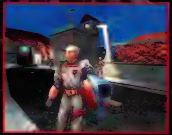
ACTIVISION®

SiN™



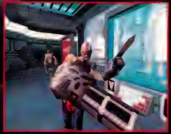
Over-the-Top Action

Blast your way through complex levels of unholy terror as you investigate the secret source of the crime epidemic plaguing the city.



Hyper-Interactive Environments

Walk, run, swim, and even drive through six distinct worlds enriched with beautiful graphic detail and a rich interwoven story line.



Never-Before-Seen Weapons

Your arsenal includes laser-sighting sniper rifles, remote-control detonation devices and extreme weapons so powerful they will rip you apart.

Multiplayer Sinfests

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EYEWITNESS

THE PC GAMING UNIVERSE IN 13 PACKED PAGES...

ACTION

TOMB RAIDER III

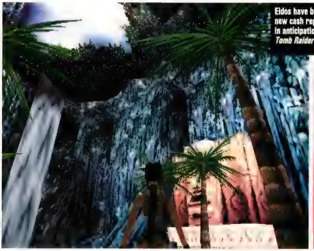
And so the inevitable comes to pass...

It's official. As if you couldn't guess, Lara Croft *will* return – in the imaginatively titled *Tomb Raider III*. Eidos officially confirmed the existence of Number 3 at E3, and have slated the game for release just prior to Christmas. Which, we hope, may just be possible, seeing as the *TR* team at Core have been working on the game solidly for the past six months, and it's apparently 40-50% complete.

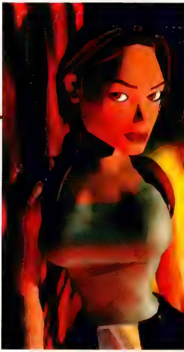
So what will this latest addition to Ms Croft's global jaunts offer us over the other two? Well, it's going to be a bigger game than the others (undoubtedly in profits as well as size), featuring many more exterior locations in addition to the series-defining cavernous interiors. Apparently, one of the levels will take place in the pea-souper environs of old London town, featuring a rooftop chase and an all-new skin-tight cat burglar outfit.

Graphically, too, *TR III* is going to shame its older siblings, with every visual trick in the book slapped abundantly throughout the game – coloured lighting, shadows, transparencies, moving water and a glut of extreme weather conditions will all raise their Roman profiles. However, as is becoming increasingly common, Lara's latest will be 3D card only. Also, expect new weapons, vehicles, monsters and actions; the controls are purportedly being tweaked to give a smoother, far more fluid response, which should give the occasionally bitty combat of the precursors a much-needed boost.

So then, good news all round for the legions of Lara Croft fanatics champing at the bit for more exotic adventures. However, the young lady is going to have plenty of competition later in the year, with several potentially limelight-stealing games arriving around the same time. In particular, a certain whip-wielding archaeologist will have something to say about all this artefact-looting business...



Eidos have bought new cash registers in anticipation of *Tomb Raider III*.



■ **Core will resurrect *Tomb Raider* in time for Christmas.**

E3 EXPLAINED

Exciting, effusive, and ebullient?

To those of you new to the magazine, or indeed the wonderful world of games, the enigmatic E3 might need some explaining. Standing for the Electronic Entertainment Expo, it's basically an annual trade show held in the US over three days in May. The show usually attracts around 40,000 people – all of whom are either demonstrating, or investigating the latest computer and videogames. Anyone who's anyone in the industry is there, and software companies spend literally millions of pounds trying to outdo each other with bigger, louder and more offensively garish stands than the competition.

This year, E3 was held at the World Congress Centre in Atlanta, Georgia, and PC GAMER was there in force to play all the games that you'll be seeing in the next 18 months. This issue contains the fruit of that labour.

DUNGEON KEEPER II

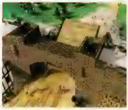
Molyneux may be gone, but *Dungeon Keeper* lives on.
PAGE 32

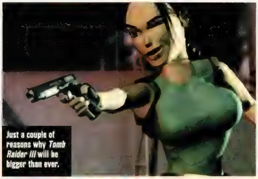
ROGUE SQUADRON

The first look at LucasArts' new Star Wars release.
PAGE 24

MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER

Bungie rectify the faults of *Myth* just in time for the sequel.
PAGE 28





Just a couple of reasons why *Tomb Raider III* will be bigger than ever.

> **"One of the levels will take place in old London town, featuring a rooftop chase and an all-new skin-tight cat burglar outfit."**

ENGINE TROUBLE

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

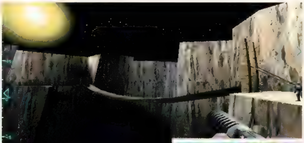
Duke forsakes *Quake*.

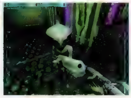
George Broussard, President of 3D Realms, has announced that *Duke Nukem Forever* will now use the *Unreal* engine.

He said that Epic's technology was more suited to the fourth *Duke* release than the *Quake II* engine they'd used to build the early parts of the game. Writing a plan update on the 3D Realms Web site, Broussard stated, "The actual conversion to the *Unreal* engine is nearly trivial. We have *Unreal* code. We have analysed it and what we need to do. We are not the least little bit concerned. What concerns us is that we can make maps MUCH larger than we were and that means more time to make them."

The game will be delayed as code is moved over to the new engine, although the end result will no doubt look much nicer. The release date is still slated as early '99.

ACTION





X-COM: ALLIANCE

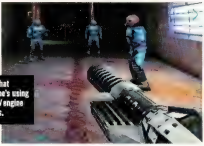
Only the name remains the same.

'Twas but a month ago that we awarded the latest *X-COM* extravaganza a mighty 90%, and with alarming speed MicroProse have announced the next chapter in their burgeoning success story. *X-COM: Alliance* will take the series' propensity, begun with *Interceptor*, for transplanting tried and trusted *X-COM* mechanics into other game genres. Whereas *Interceptor* winged out into the frozen wastes of space, *Alliance* will plunge head first into the world of the first-person shooter.

Utilising the *Unreal* engine, *Alliance* quite unsurprisingly looks beautiful. Even more exciting than the visuals, though, is the fact that (in a manner reminiscent of *Space Hulk*), you'll be able to control four characters in the game. Whichever three you're not moving around at the time will be constantly in sight, thanks to miniature monitors above the main play area.

Plus, to ensure they're not simply larking about while your back's turned, you're able to give them offensive and defensive orders. Look at these shots and drool – it seems that another excellent addition to the *X-COM* games is on its way.

■ ***X-COM: Alliance* will hopefully be exciting us in the summer of '99.**



It seems that every game's using the *Unreal* engine these days.

GOBBETS

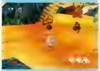
Small slices from the news pie.

PROPHETICALLY FREE

Origin are to release the next *Wing Commander* game over the Internet – for free. It'll use an advanced version of the *Prophecy* engine, and its 56 new missions, new weapons, and larger battles will be downloaded over a seven week period beginning on 24th August, preceded by plot-specific fiction. A splendidly generous offer, although it seems that they've gone quite mad.

GLOVED UP

Hasbro Interactive have taken the leap into 3D platforming with a novel twist on the genre – *Glover* has you controlling an, erm, glove (yes, really) through six themed worlds in an effort to save the Crystal Kingdom. The main quirk of the game is the possible combination of glove and ball – opening up a spectrum of new abilities and a completely different control method. Having already garnered enthusiastic previews from the N64 press, we'll be keeping a close eye on the development of the PC version. It'll be out around Christmas.



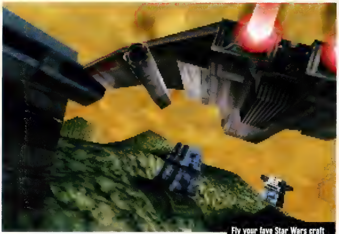
TRAINSPOTTING

Ex-Ion Storm member Mike Wilson, and his Gathering of Developers (GOD), have just found a publisher for their first batch of games. Take 2 are the company in question, and the first title to reach the shelves will be POP TOP's *Railroad Tycoon 2*, which, as the name suggests, is the sequel to Sid Meier's original. Expect more on *RRT 2* when we hunt it down.

ARCADE

STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON

With a Rebel yell, LucasArts cry more, more, more...



Fly your fave Star Wars craft over lush green landscapes.

It's a sad fact that for every truly great Star Wars title that comes along from LucasArts, they seem to knock off a real clunker. *Shadows Of The Empire* was a case in point. Apart from the exciting Battle Of Hoth snowspeeder level, it was a barren effort, a clumsy mish-mash of generic nonsense.

LucasArts obviously listened to this reaction, as *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron* takes action from the Hoth level of *Shadows* and expands it to create an all-new space blaster. Set between Star Wars and The Empire Strikes Back, the Rogue Squadron is a crack outfit of rebel pilots to whom all dangerous missions are entrusted.

The different mission types include dogfights, reconnaissance forays, escort duties, rescues and search and destroy assignments. As is usual in Star Wars games, snatches of movie dialogue are transformed into huge, involved scenarios with one mission sending the player to the spice mines of Kessel to rescue Rebel prisoners from under the noses of Imperial AT-ATs, AT-STs and TIE Fighters.

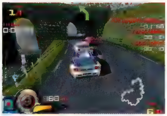
Featuring A-Wings, X-Wings, Y-Wings, V-Wings (?!) and snowspeeders, *Rogue Squadron* could provide the arcade action alternative for those who find *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter* too hard.

■ ***Star Wars: Rogue Squadron* is scheduled for an autumn release.**

RACING

ULTIMATE RACE RALLY

Kalisto get dirty with gorgeous Pro.



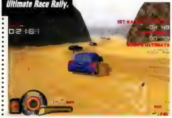
Ultimate Race Pro, for all its faults, was a rip-roaring little racer, and looked dribble-droolingly lovely to boot. *Ultimate Race Rally*, the inevitable sequel, looks set to improve on its predecessor in all departments.

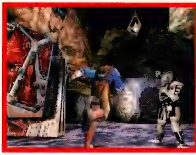
Of most import is the introduction of a proper championship; you'll be able to race seven CPU or human opponents whose skill is dependent upon how well you drive. Elsewhere, a modicum of performance optimisation will be available, and there'll be a choice of 16 disparate rally machines to hurl around.

As before, the lush tracks appear to be a high point, this time running the gamut of geographical wonder, from Greece to the Alps, with a whole plethora of weather conditions available.

A cut-down version of the game will initially be bundled with the next generation of PowerVR cards before the retail version makes it out in November.

Get used to the handbrake key for *Ultimate Race Rally*.



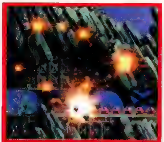


BENEATH

Going underground with Activision.

Coming from Presto Studios, the team behind the really-quite-good adventure *Journeyman Project 3*, *Beneath* will take you to the bowels of the earth in the best Jules Verne tradition, encountering primitive troglodyte tribes and inhuman insectoid hives. The levels (12 in total) are vast and fully 3D, spread over three 'worlds' and allowing for such novel activities as rappelling, vaulting and abseiling, while coping with environmental dangers such as earthquakes, rock slides and volcanic activities. We look forward to commandeering a screw-tipped mole machine.

Beneath will tunnel towards shops in time for September.



ODDWORLD: ABE'S EXODDUS

GT's latest is sure to put the wind up you.

Those harbouring a penchant for green-skinned freaks with terrible wind are in for a treat this September, as GT unleash *Abe's Exoddus*, the second in a projected series starring the titular hero. Carrying directly on from *Abe's Oddysee*, the plot sees Abe journeying to city-of-the-dead Necrum in order to stop more Mudokon-based foodstuff production. It'll essentially be the same flick-screen platformer that the previous game was, although there'll be new 'GameSpeak' words and possession powers, plus plenty more flatulence (which can be used as a weapon this time around).

STRATEGY

SOULBRINGER

Everybody's Tolkien about Gremlin's new role-playing game. Ha ha ha.

A stinking crypt and a brewing storm. But that's enough of our office. Yuk yuk.

The game authoritatively billed as 'Untitled: The Return' in our January '98 preview issue now has a name. Gremlin have settled on the ominous inflections of *Soulbringer*, which fits right in with the fantasy onus of the game. Because *Soulbringer*, apparently, is going to be an RPG of an epic nature, using a third-person viewpoint, you'll be able to converse with over 100 different characters, who'll communicate in a combination of text and speech. Your own character will purportedly be designed from hundreds of different combinations of arms, heads and legs. And, rather than simply choosing one of the usual warrior/cleric/mage archetypes, your class will be defined from a plethora of skills that will determine what you can and can't do within the parameters of the game.

The world itself will consist of 100 huge maps, many being sprawling outdoor expanses. A fully rotational, manually definable camera should help you to navigate these without a problem, and an allegedly vast number of moves and actions should help thwart the enhanced-AI of the demons and undead.

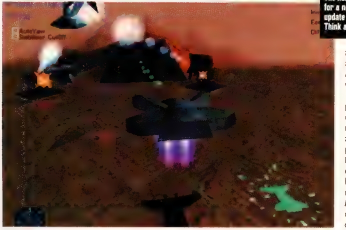
■ ***Soulbringer* has been slated for release early next year. Get your goblin suits and chainmail jerkins ready.**

ACTION

LANDER

Fast and furious thrusting appeals to us all.

The next game due for a next-gen update will be *Pong*. Think about it. Yes.



Retro-revival fever worms its way into Psygnosis' HQ and the result is *Lander*, which can be tenuously described as an update of the coin-op classics *Lunar Lander* or *Gravitar*. You remember: guide your vector wire-frame ship around with the use of thrust and rotation. We say 'tenuously' because *Lander* appears to take this ancient idea and build a huge, complex and detailed game around it, not dissimilar to the way Activision recently overhauled that other vector dinosaur *Battlezone*.

The concept remains in having to pilot your lander (there are four to choose from) successfully through 40 modular missions, all apparently accurately modelled on terrain from the planets and moons of our solar system. Diverse weather conditions and other ephemera (ferrying fuel pods and such like) will affect handling, conveniently making your life much harder. Also, *Lander* will be Psygnosis' first DVD game – we'll watch its development with great interest.

GOBBETS

BOXING CLEVER

EA sports are to bring the *Quake* of real-life sports – boxing, natch – to the PC. *Knockout Kings* features motion-captured big names Sugar Ray Leonard, Oscar De La Hoya and Shane Mosley, as well as their 'signature moves' (punches, we guess). Of greatest interest, though, will be the ability to pit boxing legends against one another. Bets are already being taken for our Mohammed Ali/ Rocky Marciano bout.

PANDEM-ONIUM

Newly minted developers Pandemic Studios are to have five games published by the mighty Activision. The first of these will be sequels to the well-received *Battlezone* and *Dark Reign*. Expect a summer 1999 release.

INSECT EXHUMATION

Remember *Centipede*? Well, Hasbro are turning their attentions to a next generation update. Ostensibly the same as the original in terms of action and plot (kill bugs, shoot mushrooms and rescue people) the new version will, of course, come complete with snazzy 3D graphics and environments. It sounds eerily similar to Hasbro's *Frogger 3D* update, although let's hope it's a little better.

TOP OF THE OPS

Zombie have announced that *Spec Ops 2* is already in development. If they iron out the manifest faults of the first game, which was otherwise good, then they could be on to a winner.

Prof. n/s or GSOH?

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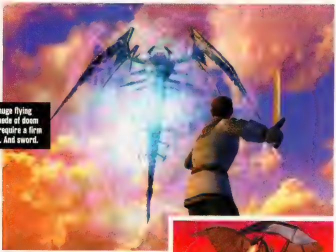
ROLE-PLAYING

ULTIMA IX ASCENSION



The huge flying millipede of doom will require a firm hand. And sword.

Ultima's now on its ninth life.

Fans of *Ultima*, the longest-running RPG series, will soon be treated to its ninth instalment.

By far the best-looking *Ultima* game, *Ascension* eschews the semi-overhead view of previous *Ultima* games for a full 3D engine – slowing the pace of the game considerably. Although your companions Iolo, Dupre and Shamino join you once again, developers Origin have opted to offer control of only the Avatar. Subsequently looking more like *Tomb Raider* than a typical *Ultima* game, and with a somewhat reduced RPG stance as far as stats go, Origin promise that *Ascension* is still weighted heavily towards exploration and dialogue.

The game boasts over 100 NPCs – each with full speech – as well as a storyline which sees the Guardian taking over Britannia upon the Avatar's return from Pagan. The graphics are stunning – although they're currently suffering a poor frame rate due to unoptimised code – while the environment detail and size of the world should keep die-hard *Ultima* fans happy until at least number ten.

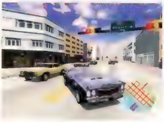
■ ***Ultima IX: Ascension*** **is due for a Christmas release.**

Look! It's lovely! Even the Russian shot-putter princess.

DRIVING

DRIVER

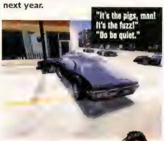
Destruction Derby developers, Reflections, stick with what they know for their new game.



Currently known as *Driver* (working title), this game is set to follow in the controversial tyre-marks of *GTA* and *Carmageddon* – being a high-speed simulation of a getaway from the rozzers.

You're free to drive anywhere, positively encouraged to break the law, and obviously able to ram other vehicles – all in lovely big American cars. However, whether it can live up to the simplistic but compelling action of *GTA* – or even the '80s motorbike cop show CHiPS, remains to be seen.

■ **Expect *Driver* (or whatever it ends up being called) to appear early next year.**



"It's the pigs, man! It's the fuzz!" "Do be quiet."

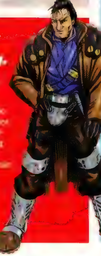
ANACHRONOX

Ion Storm finally reveal their *Quake II* fantasy.

John Romero's *Daikatana* may be stealing the limelight but expect all that to change when Ion Storm finally release screenshots of *Anachronox* next month.

The design brainchild of Tom Hall, *Anachronox* utilises the *Quake II* engine for something other than a first-person shooter. In fact, *Anachronox* will be a *Chrono Trigger*/*Final Fantasy VII*-style RPG, with a third-person perspective and a heavy leaning towards dialogue.

In their E3 demo, *Anachronox* featured a raincoat-clad main character running around town, which beat *Quake II* hands down for textural detail, lighting effects (even lens flare was evident), and architectural diversity. A time-specific combat system – as in *Final Fantasy VII* – is used for fighting, while conversations are negotiated via dialogue boxes, and will feature full lip-synched speech in the finished game.



GOBBETS

LITTLE MONSTERS

Just when you thought the insufferable penchant for virtual pets was finally over, along comes Mindscape's *Creatures 2* (out in September) to infest your hard drive with more of the mewling little beasts. Boasting a much improved ecosystem (with weather, changing seasons and a proper food chain), plus more intelligent Norns that are more varied in appearance, and a new race that can be crossbred, *Creatures 2* offers far more than the original. If you like that sort of thing.

WELCOME TO THE GP SEATS

Funsoft are the latest publishers trying their hand at a motorbike simulation. Unlike *Redline Racer*, *Castrol Honda Superbike*, and Virgin's imminent *Superbikes*, though, *GP500* will also feature a management option. Developed in conjunction with 17-year-old German GP star Alexander Hofmann – who was runner-up in last year's World Championship – *GP500* boasts a choice of 125, 250 or 500cc bikes, 15 tracks from last year's Grand Prix, over 100 different opponents, and a simulation mode. Supporting 3Dfx cards, *GP500's* visuals look as detailed as any of its rivals, while the physics are said to be hyper-realistic. We'll know for sure in September.

GRATUITOUS NAME-CHECK SECTION

A quick mention to a couple of *Quake* players, Edame and Kill Picard, who begged us to print their names during last month's Manic Monday Wireplay event. One of them, we think, is a member of the WOW (Wombles of War) Clan, but none of us can remember which one. Sorry.

GOBBETS

A MILLION TO ONE, HE SAID

Rage Software – of *Incoming* fame – are busily beavering away on a game based on Jeff Wayne's soundtrack to War Of The Worlds. It's to be a true 3D, real-time strategy affair with, apparently, no preset missions, and deformable terrain based on actual British topography. Because, as we all know, Horsell Common in Surrey is the perfect place to mount a worldwide offensive.

Also included will be new and updated music from the ubiquitous Mr. Wayne, so you can once again relive the horror of the Red Weed. It'll be coming your way later in the summer, courtesy of GT Interactive.

A BANDWAGON APPROACHES

As well as *Driver* (featured elsewhere in Eyewitness), Reflections are working on a third-person action/adventure. Set in a dystopian future, *Steam* is described as *Tomb Raider* meets *Resident Evil*. Much like the other 295 games currently due for release, then.

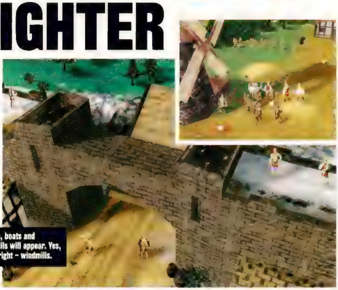
REAH-LITY BITES

The scarily named Black Friar are completing work on their graphic adventure *Reah*, which features photo-realistic artwork and scenery, live actors and plenty of puzzles. Not like *Riven*, then. Not at all. Well, maybe a bit, but it does have rather trendy trance and trip-hop tunes in it. We'll have more next issue.

STRATEGY

MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER

Graphics wizards Bungie have a few more tricks up their sleeve.



Castles, boats and windmills will appear. Yes, that's right – windmills.

Bungie have proclaimed the sequel to *Myth*, the fantasy real-time strategy game best known for its bewitching visuals and little else. *Soulblighter* is based on the existing *Myth* engine, but will witness more graphical enhancements than you can twitch your nose at. Indoor locations will abound, with castles being hotly tipped to make themselves available for the storming. Detail is king for Bungie, so expect flaming arrows raining from battlements, drawbridges being raised by the defences and evil wizards exchanging poison cloud unpleasantries. Bungie are also proud to announce terrain that will be four times as smooth and elaborate as *Myth's* impressive topography, 'organic' lighting (whatever that means), and a 3D working windmill. Yes. That's right. A working windmill.

Gore fans will also be pleased that Bungie will stop at nothing to bring us the very best in carnage; they've assigned dedicated personnel to bring us 3D fire that spreads through woods and troops alike, plus birds, squirrels and chickens… that explode. New beasties and landscapes are promised, as are, in a small concession to suggestions that the original wasn't all it might have been, improved animations, pathfinding, AI and game controls.

■ **Release dates and publisher specifics are scarce right now, but we'll bring you more on *Myth II* as we hear it.**

ARCADE

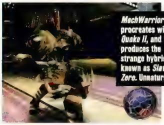
SLAVE ZERO

Stomp around busy city centres in a six-storey exo-skeleton.

If there's one thing that fires our manboy imaginations, it's stomping around in huge robots and squashing things until they're dead. Of course, *MechWarrior* has done all this before, but – and this is the crucial thing – never in the midst of a crowded metropolis.

Slave Zero, however, will. It's a third-person shoot-'em-up that puts you in control of the titular Slave, a six-storey exo-skeleton that is apparently so agile and talented that it can leap and climb. There will be other huge robots to shoot at, though, as you rampage over highways and through office blocks on your way to depose the government, crushing cars and watching the tiny people flee as you go.

So far, it all seems mightily impressive, although a spring '99 release means that we've got a while to wait.



MechWarrior procreates with *Quake II*, and produces the strange hybrid known as *Slave Zero*. Unnatural.

NOCTURNE

Things that go "AAARGH!" in the night.

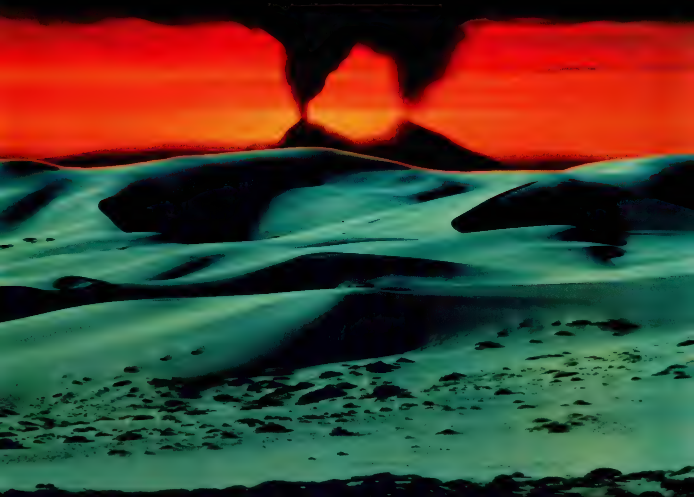
Similar in tone to Acclaim's *Shadowman*, *Nocturne* dips a toe into the murky world of the supernatural at the turn of the century, revolving around a series of brutal murders and featuring a cast of werewolves, zombies and vampires.

To fully deliver the sense of gothic tension required, Terminal Reality's *Nocturne* engine can apparently, display one billion colours in software mode (!), while running at 30 frames per second. Most excitingly, though, to complement the real-time lighting, real-time shadowing has been conquered – the results are stunning, with shadows behaving, stretching and fading exactly as they would in real life.

Nocturne will be saying "Boo!" in about a year's time.

Remastered for the new millennium

DUNE 2000



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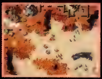

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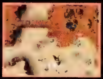
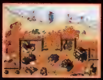


New High Colour Graphics in 8 and 16 Bit.



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PC CD-ROM

GOBBETS

PSYGNOSIS ATTACK

Psygnosis have given advance warning of multiple releases, targeting all known genres. On top of the monumental *Drakan* (action adventure that we scooped last month), they are currently labouring over *Tellurian Defence*, *O.D.T.* and *Expert Pool*. *O.D.T.* is perhaps the most mysterious of titles, but we're reliably informed it stands for Or Die Trying. It's an action adventure, distantly related to *Ecstatica*, where you wade warrior-like into the foreboding Forbidden Zone, a place which blends the pick of dark fantasy ambience, and killer monsters, with the very best in post-modern napalm violence.

PSYGNOSIS DEFEND

Then there's *Tellurian Defence*, a cockpit-led 3D shoot-'em-up in the *Terminal Velocity* mould. The skies are black with alien menace and you've got to hose them down with your near-future defence fighter, that comes with forgiving flight physics as standard. Genetically engineered wingmen and upgradeable weapons and craft should make the whole experience that bit more pleasurable.

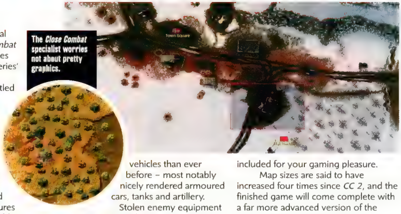
PSYGNOSIS TAKE A BREAK

***Expert Pool*, meanwhile, expects to see the colour of your money once you're availed of its alluring realistic ball and table dynamics. Over 15 variations on the 'spots' versus 'stripes' theme will vie for table-time amid 3D environments which aim to be the 'EA Sports' of pool. Over ten environments like biker bars and Las Vegas vice dens are promised.**

STRATEGY

CLOSE COMBAT 3

More front-line action from General B. Gates and his Company.



The *Close Combat* specialist worries not about pretty graphics.

Having received critical acclaim for *Close Combat 2*, developers Atomic Games have begun work on the series' third instalment.

The rather lengthily titled *Close Combat 3: Eastern Front 1941-1945* will feature maps from the Russian Steppes as the Nazis goose-step mercilessly across the Soviet Union.

The game's biggest improvement promises to be the new elevation-based 3D terrain, which now features true line-of-sight and line-of-fire.

Although still real-time and featuring plenty of foot soldiers to command, *CC 3* will include far more vehicles than ever before – most notably nicely rendered armoured cars, tanks and artillery.

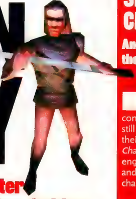
Stolen enemy equipment will now be available for use by your troops, while land mines, the ability to upgrade weapons, and even rest your troops between battles will all also be included for your gaming pleasure.

Map sizes are said to have increased four times since *CC 2*, and the finished game will come complete with a far more advanced version of the game's BattleMaker editor.

■ **Microsoft will publish *Close Combat 3* in January next year.**

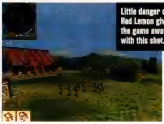
STRATEGY

TARTAN ARMY



Cry "Freedom" and slaughter Redcoats like so much Butlins-fodder.

Patriotic bunch that they are, Glasgow-based developers Red Lemon are currently toiling away on a 3D real-time strategy title that they call *Tartan Army*.



Little danger of Red Lemon giving the game away with this shot.

Looking not dissimilar to Bungie's *Myth*, but obviously substituting the knights and goblins with far scarier blokes in kilts, *Tartan Army* will allow the Highlanders to get even with the Sassenachs. Although, there'll apparently be much internecine scrapping between the clans, as they're all bent on becoming the Highlands dominant force.

Victory can be achieved either by conquering all the other clans, or convincing enough of them to back your claim to the Throne, or simply by driving out the English swine.

■ ***Tartan Army* will invade in March '99.**

SEGA RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 2

Another arcade racer gets the PC conversion treatment.

Given that Sega's fortunes rest on their new Dreamcast console, it's a surprise to see them still banging out PC conversions of their ageing arcade hits. *Sega Rally Championship 2* boasts a revved-up engine, new weather conditions and a PC-specific ten-year championship mode.

There are more than seven tracks with requisite geographical variety – desert, snow, forest, mountain and so on – and cars including Toyota Celicas and Corollas, along with bonus cars for championship finalists.

Random weather effects change with the seasons, and adverse snow and rain changes driving conditions whatever course you're racing on. Although its predecessor was something of a lightweight compared to homegrown racers, Sega seems to be making a concerted effort to tailor the PC reading of the sequel to the machine. We'll let you know how they've got on later this year.

Sega Rally Championship 2 is gearing up for an autumn release.

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GOBBETS

MORE LORDS

In place of any kind of sequel, Red Orb are marking time with a *Warlords III* 'deluxe' edition that will henceforth be known as *Darklord Rising*. Once more there will be nothing to stop you marching vast armies to and fro on the fabled world of Etheria. The vital statistics are as follows: 4 new campaigns, 12 individual scenarios, 5 new hero types, 30 new units, 10 new spells and 10 new abilities. The multitudinous options, allowing you to piece together your own campaigns, are truly bewildering and, although a graphics editor is not included, you will be able to import from other packages or use the army pictures given. *Darklord Rising* will rear its head in August and will stand alone, though Red Orb are bestowing £10 of fiscal favour on existing *Warlords III* owners.

LOST IN SPACE

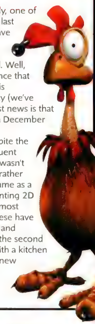
A turn-based strategy game set in a ruined, asteroid-strewn solar system is the idea behind *Malkari*, a newie from Interactive Magic. It'll be a multi-player only game, supporting up to forty players/CPU characters. The option to create your own AI and choose from a number of individual 'Guilds' should ensure that no two games are alike, and the 'Future Mode' feature, which allows players to view predicted locations and movement of asteroids, is a nice innovation.

STRATEGY

DUNGEON KEEPER II

A sequel appears to a horny old favourite.

The 'Keeper', caught on the toilet after eating too many chickens.



It was, arguably, one of THE games of last year. As it should have been, after interminable delays in development hell. Well, now we can announce that *Dungeon Keeper II* is definitely on the way (we've seen it), and the best news is that Bullfrog are set on a December release date.

However, despite the original game's frequent flashes of genius, it wasn't without its faults. A rather samey feel to the game as a whole and disappointing 2D sprites were its foremost flaws. Thankfully, these have been taken in stock and improved upon for the second instalment, along with a kitchen sink load of whizzy new features. Full 3D support is a given – in one fell swoop eliminating the sprites (they're polygons now) and giving a feel akin to the best first-person shooters when you leap into first-person mode.

Sixteen new heroes and monsters have been added, including the Maiden, (a woman's upper body attached to a spider's lower regions), and the Dark Knight, (an extremely powerful close combat warrior). Plus a smattering of new rooms, spells and traps are to be added. Units are to be more specialised, able to perform only certain tasks, and a far more diverse range of missions should sustain interest over the game as a whole. Add a far slicker interface, streamlined dungeon building and the rejection of some non-essential areas (the Scavenger Room, for starters) and Bullfrog can surely do no wrong.

■ **December is the proposed release month. We'll see.**

DRIVING

NEED FOR SPEED III: HOT PURSUIT

Drive fast, crash car. (Repeat to fade)

Completing the trio of *Need For Speed* titles which began three years ago, EA will soon be offering us *Hot Pursuit*. The ingredients include all-new licensed supercars (which have yet to be named), graphics tailored especially for 3D acceleration, all the multi-player features present in the originals (including a split-screen affair) and, most excitingly, Internet-downloadable cars. Whether this bonus scheme will follow the example set by *Total Annihilation's* influx of Web-released units is unknown, but it's an enticing prospect all the same.

Elsewhere, EA's efforts to add a few twists to the racing game include a squad of motorway cops hell-bent on spoiling everybody's speeding fun, and a staggered AI system. Over three levels of difficulty, the enemy intelligence will range from pre-set reactions and ability to fully independent – and incredibly aggressive – rival speedsters.

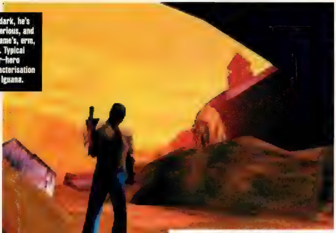
Potentially hazardous weather effects will also try to throw a few greasy spanners in the works, as adverse conditions directly affect the road surfaces. The tracks themselves, of which there are eight, will be re-used with mirror and reverse modes and contain several shortcuts and alternate routes.

■ **The brown tones of autumn shall herald its arrival.**

Cops and cars. A worrying duo if your name's Mark Donald.

ACTION

SHADOWMAN


He's dark, he's mysterious, and his name's, erm, Mike. Typical super-hero characterisation from Iguana.

Iguana reveal more of their new, grave adventure.

This could well be Acclaim's year. We've already had the stunning *Forsaken*, saurian blockbuster *Turok 2* waits in the wings, and a little game called *Shadowman* might just be fantastic.

A third-person action adventure combining elements of *Resident Evil* and (yawn) *Tomb Raider*, *Shadowman* has the potential to offer far more than either. Set in both the voodoo-entrenched murkiness of New Orleans and the undead dimension of the Deadside, hero Mike Leroi can move between the two by becoming his alter-ego, Shadowman.

The game features multiple customisable camera views and a huge amount of moves. Of most import is the ability to combine several actions at once – for instance, rolling and shooting. Throw in legions of serial killers, boundless environments, Acclaim's now-infamous propensity for ludicrous weaponry and research related objectives (studying FBI files and ancient artifacts), and it's all sounding rather splendid.

Promising to be dark, visceral and haunting – and with one level set in a faithfully recreated London Underground, maps and all – *Shadowman* will be one to watch. And we'll eat our hats if it's not so. Of course, we don't actually wear hats, except for Matt, and his says *Quake II* on it. So the ladies don't talk to him. But believe us anyway, as we know these things. Yes.

Iguana know how to do first-person shooters, which bodes well.

■ **The shadowy autumnal nights will herald its arrival.**

ACTION

There aren't many big boats in games. So this picture makes a change.

OMIKRON

PC game in 'nonsense name' shock! Let's see if it's better than its title suggests.

It seems that a new sub-genre of game may be emerging, butterfly-like, from the cocoon of a Good Idea. In a similar vein to Shiny's *Messiah*, Eidos' newie *Omikron* allows characters, once killed, to pass into the body of whoever touches them, thus possessing them.

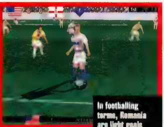
This intriguing quirk stems from the apocalyptic plot which involves diabolical soul-harvesting in a far-future city. The only man that can stop these dastardly deeds is a hero of legend, who, most inconveniently, hasn't been seen for tens of millennia, and whose mighty sword holds the key to destroying the big boss demon.

Developers Quantic Dream are aiming for a massive 3D world in which the player can quite literally do what he wants. Sprawling cities, beat-'em-up quality fighting, and full 3D shoot-outs are all promised, as is an RPG-style attribute improvement system to stop the player from simply killing himself and possessing another unfortunate. Ambitious, visually stunning, and all very exciting.

There'll be a winter blanket on the ground when *Omikron* appears.

WORLDWIDE SOCCER 98

Football? Never heard of it.


In footballing terms, Romania are light goals ahead of England.

For those who haven't yet bored of the World Cup, and the games released to coincide with it, *Worldwide Soccer 98* may be worth investigating.

Essentially an updated version of Sega's well-received original, *WWS 98* once again places the emphasis on arcade-style soccer rather than attempting to simulate the sport to any large degree of authenticity. It's precisely this that made the previous version so much fun, though – along with the fast pace and simple control system.

A potential *World Cup 98* beater? We think probably not, but we'll give you our definitive judgement shortly. *Worldwide Soccer 98* will be kicking around shops come September.

GOBBETS

THEY DON'T ACTUALLY SWEAT, YOU KNOW

Pig, then. It stands for – get this – Private Investigator George, a porcine 1920s investigator, and the latest wacky/risible (your choice) virtual hero to join the platform revolution. As has recently become the case, fully 3D free-roaming worlds are promised, spread over 40 different environments. Team 17 are the developers and we are the most excited people in the world. And we are not lying. Much.

GT RACING SPREE

GT have got a couple of racing games to add to their '98 line-up. *Trans Am Racing '68-'72*, based on the American championship of the same name, features 12 classic muscle cars – including Ford Mustangs and Pontiac Firebirds – and 13 accurately recreated courses. Spot-on physics, extensive customisation options and big crashes are promised. It'll be out in November.

The second title, *Powerslide*, opts for more extreme, off-road racing with schizophrenically diverse tracks to match, featuring deserts, sand-dunes and swamps.

Splendidly, some James Bond action is on the cards with the possibility of rolling the car onto two wheels à la Diamonds Are Forever, as well as more bizarre Spiderman-style driving on walls. 3D acceleration means that it should run at a constant 60 frames per second, and so should be one to watch out for. It'll be out in October.

GOBBETS

VIDEOLOGIC CUT CARDS

As the battle for 3D card supremacy continues, Videologic have announced dramatic price cuts for their Apocalypse range of PowerVR cards. The biggest reductions affect the Apocalypse 5D and 5D Sonic cards, which have fallen from £175 to £79, and £219 to £99 respectively – cuts of over 50%. Other cards in the series have been less drastically cut, although a slight reduction in the Apocalypse 3Dx Value Pack's price sees it retailing at just under £50. So there's no excuse not to buy one now.

HABITUAL BEHAVIOUR

Remember *Malice?* A TC for *Quake*, by Epochalypse, it was a well-designed and very tough conversion that received 87% in PCG 51. Well now, having changed their name to Ratloop, the team are working on their first full title, called *Hab12*. Although without a publisher at the moment, Ratloop are confident they'll find someone to put this third-person mixture of action and adventure on the shelves. Using the impressive Twilight 3DGE engine, and although still at alpha stage, *Hab12* already features massive environments, real-time coloured lighting and shadow-casting, as well as some of the many puzzles that will appear in the full game. We'll be sure to bring you more news as we get it.

STRATEGY

A bit like the film Wargames, except quite exciting.

GLOBAL DOMINATION

Around the world in 131 words.

The title of "most impenetrable game debuting at E3" must go to Psygnosis' *Global Domination*.

The whole game takes place on a spinning globe, which represents the entire battlefield of the game. Continents and countries are marked on the globe, while offensive and defensive missiles and orbiting satellites fly around the globe's surface upon your, or the computer's, command.

Countries change colour according to which player has domination of them, while each territory can be home to a number of missile installations, airports, harbours. Submarines, planes, and boats are used alongside the missiles to defend and attack chosen countries, while either capturing or destroying opposing nations puts them under your control.

Half strategy game, half reaction-based action title, *Global Domination* looks to be an intriguing '90s take on *Missile Command*.

■ **Psygnosis will bring you *Global Domination* this Christmas.**

STRATEGY

TRIBAL LORE

Four tribes go to war.

With a mystical, 'pseudo-Celtic' setting, and a gritty graphical style to match, *Tribal Lore* will feature four tribes (each of whom can be chosen to play as) – all bent on the destruction of the other.

As a 3D real-time strategy game – apart from the obvious combat – success will depend on management of the environment, and construction of structures (including temples, fortresses and armouries), as well as a command of magic. This latter commodity is tapped from environmental features such as menhirs and dolmen, and can be used by druids to change terrain and environmental weather conditions.

In keeping with the medieval setting, it's all looking very earthy at the moment, with beautifully animated waterfalls and whirlpools defining the landscapes.

■ **All things going to plan, *Tribal Lore* should appear at Christmas via Gremlin.**

Earthy, but strangely attractive – a bit like Gremlin in fact.

HARDWARE

VOODOO BANSHEE

3Dfx have released details of their new 2D/3D chip – the Banshee.

According to 3Dfx, the chip delivers the highest levels of 3D performance on record. The dual chip, which is being developed from the Voodoo2 technology, will be able to run Voodoo1 and 2 compatible games, while 2D improvements are due to GDI functions being carried out in hardware rather than software.

Being optimised for DirectX 6, Glide and OpenGL, and supporting both AGP and PCI, the Banshee's specifications certainly sound impressive enough. Whether they can keep the price down, and persuade existing card owners to convert to it, though, is another matter altogether.

■ **September should see Banshee cards on the shelf.**

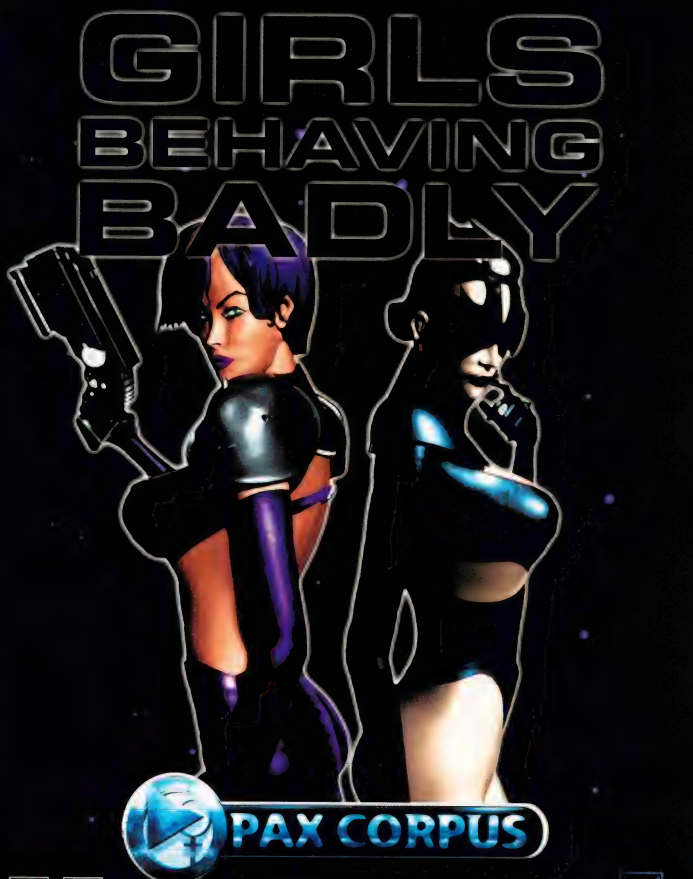
INTERACT COMPO

Win a trip to Silverstone!

Glancing at page 169 you'll be treated to a review of the Ultraracer – the new hand-held steering-wheel paddle from InterAct. Scoring a very respectable 85% from our kid Bickham, it's a cheap, comfy alternative to a proper wheel, and is a quarter of the size too. It's so nice, in fact, that InterAct are celebrating its release by offering one lucky swine – wait for it – a ticket to Silverstone to race the car of their choice around the world-famous circuit.

Choose from a Formula First Single Seater, a six-speed Touring Car, a Rally Peugeot 306 or a 4x4 drive through a cross-country course. You'll laugh, you might cry, and you'll probably crash – but you'll receive training from an experienced professional so don't worry about it. Second prize is an InterAct V3 Racing Wheel, and a third runner-up will win an Ultraracer. To win, simply answer the following question: Which car is this anagram a clever jumbled-up version of? "Bolkswagen Veetle." Jot your answer on the back of a postcard and send to: **"Cars Are Ace!" PC GAMER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.** Oh, and you'll need a driving licence if you win. Obviously.

Doesn't look like a steering-wheel, does it? Acts like one, though.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BEHAVING
BADLY
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PlayStation

PC CD

Available on PC
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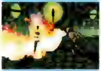
CRYO

GOBBETS

MORE KOMBAT 4 SIRP

The Game That Wouldn't Die, *Mortal Kombat*, returns in an all-new 3D incarnation, complete with side-steps and interactive arenas. Currently wowing the arcade fraternity, the PC version of *MK4* should reach us in October, featuring a few new characters, plenty of older, 'classic' ones and an alleged 60fps. Expect buckets of gore, tasteless fatalities and half-naked women.



UNLIMITED, SHOCKING NEWS

Looking Glass announced at E3 that work will soon begin on *System Shock 2* and *Flight Unlimited III*. The long-awaited sequel to the superb, but criminally under-rated, *System Shock* will be a first-person Sci-Fi RPG. According to Looking Glass, *SS2* will "match the role-playing depth" of the original as well as having dramatically improved graphics, AI and 3D card support. Both *System Shock 2* and *Flight Unlimited III* will be published by Electronic Arts late next year – a split from the firm's usual Eidos stable.

AGE OF EMPIRES STRIKES BACK

Details have emerged concerning the *Age Of Empires* expansion pack. With the sequel slipping until next year, the Christmas pack will feature four new civilisations (Carthage, Palyra, Macedonia and Rome), new units like camel riders, spiked chariots, armoured elephants and warships, as well as 25 new structures. Three campaigns are made up of 20 new scenarios – with the game's focus on the rise of the Roman Empire. Larger maps, and new terrain types (peninsulas, islands and highlands) complete the package.

PLATFORMER

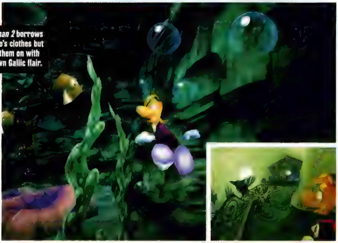
RAYMAN 2

Like an obsessive flatmate, Rayman copies Mario's every move.

The original *Rayman* was a smart little platformer that garnered itself a more than respectable 86% way back in PCG 28. Now, however, with the goalposts having been moved by at least several hundred miles – thanks to Shigeru Miyamoto's incredible *Mario 64* – the onus is on next generation platform games to conquer free-roaming 3D. Pretenders to the throne have been conspicuous in their failings, most notably the flaccid *Sonic 3D* and the ho-hum *Croc*.

It's at this point that Ubi Soft deliver a swift broadside by announcing the release of *Rayman 2*, which – gasp! – is very much borne of the flagship Nintendo 64 game.

Despite taking its cue (and much of its inspiration) from the fat plumber, *Rayman 2* aims to bring a few of its own tricks to the party. The outlandish plot – his friends are imprisoned in an intergalactic zoo by nasty robots – is mirrored in the gorgeously surreal environments, and the main character has more than a few tricks up his short sleeves. Most impressive is Rayman's unfortunately named 'magic fist', which can be used as a grapple and as a torch amongst other things. Add to this some magical powers, helpful allies with skills of their own and Rayman's huge range of comedy facial expressions and physical abilities, and you've got one PC platform fans should watch out for.



***Rayman 2* borrows Mario's clothes but puts them on with its own Gallic flair.**

■ **Ubi Soft will be putting *Rayman 2* on shelves for Christmas.**

ACTION

URBAN CHAOS

Ex-frogs spawn chaotic new game.

■ *Urban Chaos*, the debut game from developers Mucky Foot (a group of Bullfrog alumni), appears to be going great guns to offer players the most complete 3D game world yet.

Previously known as *City Of The Fallen* and *Dark City* (which should give some indication of the Armageddon-based plot), it'll feature a totally traversable city in which buildings can be entered, rooftops clambered upon and sewers negotiated. Vehicles such as subway trains and motorcycles – and even a hang glider – can be hijacked and used, and an unbelievable amount of environmental effects have been crammed in. Various weather effects, a unique day-to-night feature, swirling leaves, litter and pigeons should all conspire to create an atmosphere as yet undreamed of. Complete freedom of mission objectives is the final claim on Mucky Foot's list of very big claims. Can they pull it off? We certainly hope so.

Where are the traffic jams and riots? *Urban Chaos*, my foot.

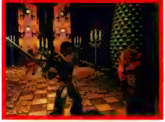
■ **Eidos are publishing, but don't expect *Urban Chaos* before March next year.**

ASGHAN

A shot in the arm for facial-toplarists everywhere.

Fantasy enthusiasts will be tugging their beards in excitement at Grolier's latest. Featuring swords, sorcery and huge dragons, *Asghan* boasts a *Tomb Raider/Die By The Sword* third-person camera, plus a first-person view for ballistic duties. Our hero – the eponymous Asghan – has a crossbow welded onto an armour-plated forearm, thanks to an encounter with an excitable dragon. When this is used, the view defaults to the first-person for greater accuracy. It's a nice touch, and works well.

The game will feature over 30 sprawling 3D accelerated levels and an impressive roster of 60 beasts. We'll see how *Asghan* shapes up come the autumn.



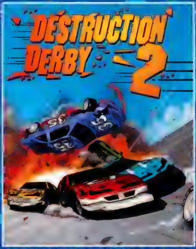
ARGENTUM COLLECTION PSYGNOSIS

RED HOT RACING

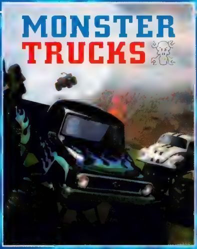
FORMULA 1

wipEout 2097

WIPEOUT 2097


DESTRUCTION DERBY 2

DESTRUCTION DERBY 2


MONSTER TRUCKS

MONSTER TRUCKS

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ARGENTUM COLLECTION

PSYGNOSIS PC CD ROM

[illegible] Argentum Collection [illegible]

DREAMCAST: SEG

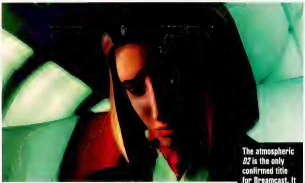
One of the great names in videogames has had a tough few years. But Sega are now fighting back with a brand new PC-derived console that could revolutionise the gamebox business.

By OWAIN BENNALLACK

SPECIAL REPORT

ON 21st May, struggling console and coin-up manufacturer Sega announced their little white hope, Dreamcast. Launching this year in Japan on 20th November, it looks like it might finally lay to rest the ghost of the Saturn, their underperforming 32bit console which suffered in the wake of Sony's all-conquering PlayStation.

To PC owners who can't wait until the next paragraph, the news may seem academic. Aside from a few excellent exceptions (*Tomb Raider* and *Turok*, for example), joint console/PC projects always seem to produce the games you'd least like to play. Certainly, the pre-eminent Japanese games publishers and developers – not to mention Sega and Nintendo's own in-house teams – have traditionally given the PC a wide berth.



The atmospheric *D2* is the only confirmed title for Dreamcast. It is developed by maverick coder Kenji Eno and his Warp company.

Dreamcast will change things. For a start, Bill Gates is involved. Dreamcast's operating system is a lite version of Windows known as Windows CE. Designed for handheld PCs, cellular phones and, erm... games consoles, Windows CE ditches many of Windows' cumbersome features but still enables developers to easily access CD-ROM drives and networks as if Dreamcast was a proper computer. Dreamcast's version of Windows CE also includes a version of DirectX 6 which has been optimised specifically for Dreamcast's processor, the Hitachi SH-4.

The 200MHz SH-4 is ten times more powerful than the equivalent chips in the Saturn, although the Saturn did have a pair of Hitachi's SH-2s working in tandem. Moreover, Hitachi controversially claim that the SH-4 enables Dreamcast to perform floating-point calculations – the backbone of 3D graphics – four times faster than a Pentium II 266. Consistently feeding sufficient polygons to the graphics chipset is vital to maintain smooth frame-rates, as anyone with an underpowered PC teamed with a 3Dfx Voodoo II will testify.

Sega have veered back towards PC territory for their graphics hardware, plumping for Videologic's PowerVR Second Generation (PVRSG) chipset. An extremely close cousin of the PC-targeted PVRSG chipset due out this autumn, the Videologic hardware will also power Naomi, an arcade set-up which will replace Sega's ageing Model 3 boards. With the SH4/PVRSG combination comfortably handling around 1.5 million polygons per second (Sega are claiming 3 million), the path is laid open for Naomi games being ported to Dreamcast.

Equally, the combination of Windows CE and a PC-friendly graphics chipset makes conversions between PC and Sega's console easy. So, it's fair to say that when it's first launched, Dreamcast will have a specification similar to, or better than, that of a high-end PC. Admittedly, the console will seem less stunning when it arrives in the UK a year later, but it should still be possible to convert most arcade-style PC games to Dreamcast.

The fact that *D2* was originally planned for M2, the scrapped 3DO follow-up that Matsushita backed, did not deter Sega.

A'S PC CONSOLE

Dreamcast's N64-esque analogue controller looks worryingly like an extinct horseshoe crab. Not the best of portents.

"When it's launched, Dreamcast will have a specification similar to, or better than, a high-end PC."

"They're stealing all our games!" I hear the xenophobes cry. Actually, since Dreamcast will soon be the PC's underpowered cousin and since it also puts odd features like the Visual Memory System and an analogue stick in the way of developers, porting from Dreamcast to the PC could actually be the simpler route. And in some ways, PC owners have more to gain. Anyone who's played *Final Fantasy VII* on the PC will know consoles are home to some great games. Yet PC games usually sell far fewer copies than console games. The ease of porting Dreamcast games to the PC makes the economics more favourable.

At the very least, this means access to work by Sega's peerless internal development divisions, AM2 and AM3. It should also see respected Japanese developers like Konami, Namco and Capcom becoming PC household names. Indeed, it's when you start to lament what we won't be seeing (such as the excellent Nintendo and Rare games being released right now on the N64, like *Zelda 64* and *GoldenEye*) that you realise what we've been missing.

Dreamcast will go on sale for around ¥30,000 (£125) in Japan, nearly four years to the day on from the Saturn launch. Sega promise that when it's released a year later in the UK, it should cost no more than £250. For a system that also includes a modem, it's a tempting price. It won't threaten the PC, which will always offer games that consoles simply can't support, but it does mean we've got more in common with our console cousins than ever before.

Peace in our time? Course not – we'll still get the best versions of all the games... PCG

WHAT'S IT GOT THAT WE'VE NOT?

Dreamcast is a pants name, no question. But it does actually mean something, referring to the posse of manufacturers who've ganged up on Sony and created a machine for a new generation. Or something.

Processor
Speedy 200MHz SH-4, designed by regular Sega cohorts, Hitachi.

Graphics
PowerVR Second Generation chipset from Videologic, who also makes PC graphics chipsets. 3Dfx was the first choice, but weren't deemed dreamy enough.

Audio
64-channel fella with surround-sound style effects. Created by Yamaha, who also make keyboards you can get in Argos.

Operating System
Windows CE. Like Windows, only smaller with no GUI and no calculator. Designed by Bill Gates, who also makes millions.

RAM
16Mb. Created by some nameless Far Eastern plant that employs ruined stockbrokers to spill chemicals into the Coral Sea.

Controller
Analogue-stick and digital joypad with dual triggers and slots for 'game-enhancing' goodies such as vibrating packs and the VMS.

Modem
33.6kbps. Sega are planning their own Wireplay-style network that's easy enough for console owners to connect to. It might just kickstart on-line gaming.

VMS
The Virtual Memory System. Looks like a Tamagotchi and fits into the top of the joypad. Stores game data, has a programmable LCD screen and can connect to other VMSes and even arcade machines. This sort of thing is very big in Japan where it's used for games like *Pocket Monsters*.

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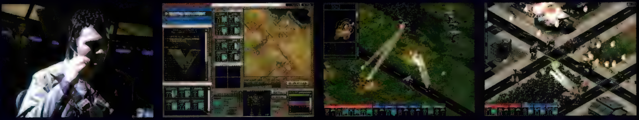

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LET THE BATTLE COMMENCE!

The 3D shoot-'em-up market is the most cut-throat in the world. As *Quake II* and *Unreal's* challengers limber up for a scrap, we take a look at their form and see if they have a hope in hell of lasting more than a couple of rounds...

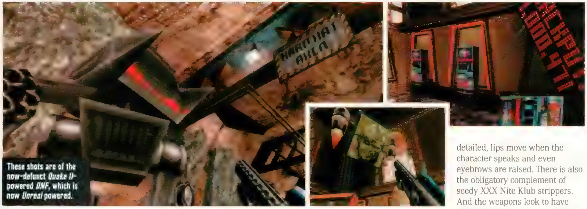
By JAMES FLYNN and MATTHEW PIERCE

The 3D shoot-'em-up is the most hotly contested PC genre. Ever since *Wolfenstein* and *Doom* turned up, blew our brains out and sodded off down the bank with several million dollars, people have wanted to get in on the act. But it's not easy – in the past five years only *Doom, Duke Nukem Forever, Quake* and *Unreal* have made any impression in this mean old world, and for each of these there have been ten *Tekwars, Chasms* or *Rebel Moon Risings*

As the next group of hopefuls climb through the ropes and stare at the videogame equivalent of an amphetamine-crazed 'Iron' Mike Tyson, what are their chances? Can *any* of them match *Unreal's* outstanding graphics? Will *Quake's* deathmatch game knock them out before they start? And, most importantly, where have all those wizards and elves and goblins gone?

The following 20 games are our top bets to usurp the pre-eminent *Quake*. We aren't saying they will (although a couple certainly ought to), but each game has a little something that could make it special. By the way, you may notice that there isn't a single British contender in the lot. May the best game win!

Duke Nukem Forever [3D Realms]



These shots are of the now-defunct *Quake II*-powered *DNF*, which is now *Unreal* powered.

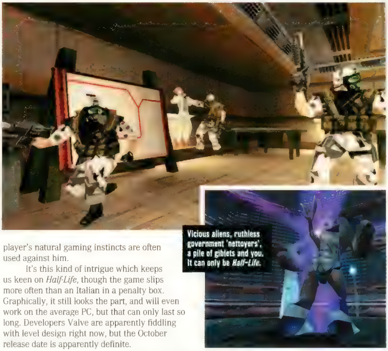
FIRST THE BAD NEWS: *DUKE NUKEM Forever* won't be released until next spring. Now the good news: it looks as if it'll fulfil our every wish. 3D Realms were showing the game off behind closed doors at E3, but have since surprised the development world by announcing that *Duke* will now use *Unreal's* engine rather than *Quake II's*. The Duke himself is looking in a different league to any of the other 3D game heroes (bar *Prey's*), and while there were no finished levels for us to see, the team has managed to get his four different pairs of shades working. Duke also has a female friend (who makes Lara look somewhat inadequate in the upper body department) and the chances are you will get to play with her (how very droll) at certain points during the game.

Duke Forever's use of *Unreal's* engine should ensure the effects are the best we'll have seen upon its release. An area where *Duke* is sure to excel, however, is in the characterisation – the texture of people's faces is incredibly detailed, lips move when the character speaks and even eyebrows are raised. There is also the obligatory complement of seedy XXX Nite Klub strippers. And the weapons look to have more bells and whistles than any other 3D contender bar *Turok 2*.

As they did with the original *Duke*, 3D Realms are genuinely trying to advance the way 3D games play. Many of the world's items will be useable (turrets, jet-skis, projectors, etc.) and the entire environment should be completely deformable. With nine months of development time still to go and looking gorgeous already, *Duke* is one to hold out for. There's clearly some major rivalry between 3D Realms' *Duke* and *Prey* teams – something that can only be good for us.

Greatest advantage: This is Duke. **Achilles heel:** Is it taking just too long? **When is Judgement Day?:** Easter 1999

Half-Life [valve]



Vicious aliens, ruthless government 'nettoyers', a pile of giblets and you. It can only be *Half-Life*.

JOURNALISTS OF E3 SHOWS PAST HAVE been paying homage to Sierra's *Quake*-powered shooter for many moons. Eighteen months ago it promised to be the most exciting spot of gibbage around, and even now it still looks like the best bet for a good time.

Like *Unreal* it aims to stretch the boundaries of the genre by injecting some well-paced drama and cunningly crafted set-piece action into the usual run of popping round corners and fonduing the next baddie.

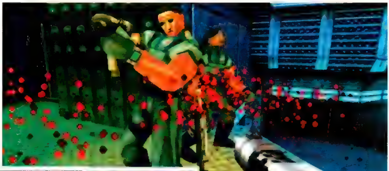
In-game scripted sequences mesh with the interactive action to provide gratuitous gore, and clues to the disposal of alien scum. For instance, at one point you witness a many tentacled monster snuff scientists in particularly unpleasant circumstances. And anyone wearing their clever clogs will notice that this creature hunts by sound. Keep your finger off the trigger, approach with sly caution and you won't have to quickload too often.

Even more intriguingly you're slap-pooper-bang in the middle of a government conspiracy; so you're not only fighting pan-dimensional beings long on teeth but also human Secret Service 'Cleaners' short on ethics. While being assisted by other human factions. And the occasional alien organism that admires how much food you make for it. Thus in *Half Life's* complex environment the usual friend/foe order is chucked frisbee-like out the window as a player's natural gaming instincts are often used against him.

It's this kind of intrigue which keeps us keen on *Half-Life*, though the game slips more often than an Italian in a penalty box. Graphically, it still looks the part, and will even work on the average PC, but that can only last so long. Developers Valve are apparently fiddling with level design right now, but the October release date is apparently definite.

Greatest advantage: Its narrative. **Achilles heel:** Overreaching ambition **When is Judgement Day?:** October 1998

Sin {ritual}

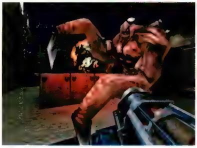


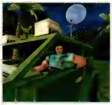
HAVING SUFFERED AS MANY DELAYS AS *Daikatana* (another victim of the time-consuming crossover to *Quake II* technology), *Sin* is the first 'proper' game due out from fledgling developers Ritual.

The team cut their teeth on the *Quake* mission pack, *The Scourge Of Armagon* – before setting about Carmack's new code and adding the enhancements that *Sin's* ambitious blueprint required. And after playing a 'nearly finished' *Sin* at E3, the overhauling of Id's engine appears to have been integral in producing some of the most original touches yet seen in a first-person shooter.

The heavy bias that Ritual have placed on interactive scenery is particularly evident. Wandering around the futuristic (but always believable) locations, one is almost always granted the opportunity of destroying objects and scenery. Jeeps blow up, bridges and walkthroughs are destroyed by blasting their supports, chunks can be ripped out of buildings, glass shatters and furnishings can be smashed. Four separate 'police trainer'-style target practice booths are even provided as a pre- or mid-game diversion.

Although opting for realism rather than Sci-Fi hokum, *Sin's* obligatory over-the-top weaponry is as innovative and destructive a selection as we've yet seen. The inevitable timed mines, chainguns and shotguns feature, but the most exciting and welcome addition has to be the sniper rifle, which – fingers crossed – may manage to rival *GoldenEye's*.





"You like my jeep? Ees good. I pay feefty American dollar for eet. You like my sister?"

Greatest advantage: Ritual's level design talent. **Achilles heel:** Dull palette. **When is Judgement Day?:** September 1998

3D Dreams

You may think *Quake II* was the ultimate 3D engine. However, in the last nine months diligent programmers have been working on all manner of flashy improvements in the hope it will give their game the edge. Here is the technical wish-list for the upcoming combatants.

16bit colour: Although *Quake II* manages perfectly well with 8bit lighting, the next generation of games should feature full 16bit colour effects.

Detail mesh reduction: A process where the character models used can be simplified the further away from the camera they are. DMR speeds rendering up massively without harming the appearance.

True animation: Realistic animation is almost as important as the gameworlds themselves today. The winners will feature inverse kinematics to create convincing death sequences according to where the enemy is hit and by what weapon.

Skin alterations: Various parts of the anatomy must show direct damage. Also, if a leg is hit, that must be the only body part to visibly be damaged.

Coloured lighting: We demand realism. And coloured lights.

Open spaces: No more endless corridors – level designers must be able to create massive areas for us to fight in.

Multiple monsters: Life should be hard because you are being swamped with adversaries – not because the one grunt ahead of you is as tough as nails! One of the core challenges for the next generation of 3D games will be to feature 20 enemies on screen at once. Like *Doom* did.

Good AI: There's a long way to go on this one, despite the massive improvements made.

Shadows: The game should be capable of determining whether you are in shadows and moving silently (and therefore make enemies ignore you).

Faces: We need to love, hate and identify with who we are shooting! High resolution textures that stand up to close inspection are long overdue.

Interactive scenery: See that door? You don't anymore. A couple of moving platforms are all passé now – we need fully destructible walls and scenery.

3D sound: There's nothing to beat good, event-driven sounds if you want to add some extra bite to the aural atmosphere.

Allied characters: *Half-Life* and *Unreal* feature game characters which aid you if you treat them right (i.e. don't shoot them). A little more thought about the inhabitants wouldn't go amiss.

Lots of ammo and guns: Don't penalise players by skimping on ammunition – give 'em loads and pack every level with even more monsters.

Inventory objects: *Heretic* and *Hexen* have been bulging with extra items in their inventories for years. They are a good idea but need to be executed more.

Transparency, fogging environment mapping, etc: A full suite of 3D card effects must be ours to slaver over – but not at the expense of speed.

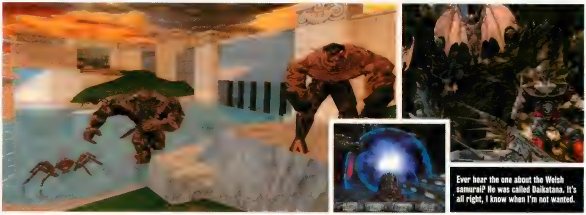
Non repeating textures: Worlds should not be chessboards.

Daikatana{ion storm}

AFTER MAKING A LOW-KEY, NON-accelerated debut at last year's E3, expectations were high for John Romero's baby this time round. But while *Daikatana* looked far slicker than before, with some incredibly detailed monsters, a highly eclectic bunch of original weapons and some imaginative environments, it was still outshone – technically, at least – by many of the forthcoming *Quake II* and *Unreal*-powered titles.

Content-wise, nowt appears to have changed from Romero's original blueprint. The game will feature four worlds – futuristic Kyoto, ancient Greece, the Dark Ages in Norway, and Alcatraz circa 2030AD. As Hiro Miyamoto, you're accompanied by two others, Mikko Ehihara and Superfly Johnson, who have the power to resurrect you. Beneath *Daikatana's Quake II* helmet, however, lies a magnificent RPG-dyed bouffant. Experience points are awarded according to the amount of monsters you kill and the progress you make, whereas the *Daikatana* itself (a Japanese sword) gains 'ability' points too.

Expect to see loads of rotating objects, fog, rain and snow, translucency effects and different palettes for each world. Two innovations: weapons can't be carried to different worlds (apart from the Daikatana); and every world's creatures are completely different – so far, a grand total of 74 monsters have been modelled.

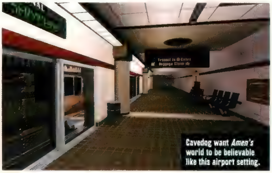

Ever hear the one about the Welsh samurai? He was called Daikatana. It's all right, I know when I'm not wanted.

Greatest advantage: Jon Romero. **Achilles heel:** Already being overtaken. **When is Judgement Day?:** September 1998

Amen{cavedog}

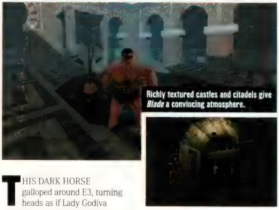
NEWCOMERS CAVEDOG succeeded in giving the strategy genre a kick with *Total Annihilation* and they're trying to repeat their apple-cart smashing routine with *Amen*. "We're going for a full-on story," explains *Amen's* Producer. "Shoot-'em-ups never provide a coherent reason for the fighting so we've designed every level and every puzzle on paper already to ensure we always have a believable and exciting world."

This translates to huge and involving quests in settings which already include aircraft carriers, post-apocalyptic cities, airports and sewer systems. Weapons and certain scripted events will alter the scenery to open up new areas and each level is being designed to give a solid feel – walls will not be paper thin, there will be huge generators and reactors to provide a feeling of scale, and actions is one area will have knock on effects in others.


Cavedog want *Amen's* world to be believable like this airport setting.

Greatest advantage: Fresh ideas and an emphasis on story.
Achilles heel: Cavedog have never written a 3D game.
When is Judgement Day?: June 1999

Blade{rebel act studios}


Richly textured castles and citadels give *Blade* a convincing atmosphere.

THIS DARK HORSE galloped around E3, turning heads as if Lady Godiva herself was astride it. Unashamedly fantasy-based, with trolls, goblins and ogres to slice and dice, most of *Blade's* action takes place in and around medieval castles.

Spanish developers Rebel Act have achieved great things with their proprietary engine, particularly noteworthy are the incredible lighting effects and the general level of detail – both of which are maintained at huge draw distances with no speed loss.

Although weapons are of the hand-to-hand variety, anything in *Blade* can be picked up and used in combat, as long as it's not too heavy. Look forward to rolling barrels at goblins, and throwing light fittings at orcs.

Two characters (muscle-man and buxom wench, natch), an optional third-person view, superb physics, and amazing water effects, make *Blade* one to watch.

Greatest advantage: The Spanish should have different ideas.
Achilles heel: Are swords as sexy as guns?
When is Judgement Day?: December 1998

Prey (3d realms)

The potential of *Prey's* portal technology is clear from 3D Realms' demos and every released shot of it.

THIS ROUND-UP CONTAINS SOME OF the most ambitious and stunning looking PC games ever, but *Prey* could eclipse them all. Originally shown last year, *Prey* is the first of the 'next' generation of 3D games. It's holding nothing back technically and the developers are going to have the luxury of three years to create their masterpiece. The much vaunted portal technology – a revolutionary method to create and display 3D space – is in place and still being tweaked. Its ramifications for level design should prove as significant as any that a single game has ever made. Portals don't impose the same limitations on altering levels in real-time as today's engines, so vast chunks of the scenery can be moved, collapsed and annihilated at the designer's whims. Portals also speed up the true colour light reflections and environment mapping, leaving more time and memory to draw amazingly detailed environments and textures - at a level that's even more astounding than that of *Duke Nukem Forever.*

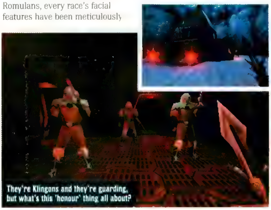
Encouragingly, 3D Realms are lavishing as much attention on the story as the technology. Talon Brave, *Prey's* new-age Apache Indian hero, begins his adventure on Earth in a reserve, but this closeted existence is soon over as he encounters the Trocara, an enigmatic alien collective travelling through the galaxy on their gigantic mothership, and the mysterious Keepers. Basically, *Prey* is the one we all want to play – it is a light year ahead of any other game mentioned here. Give it to us now.

Greatest advantage: Portal technology. **Achilles heel:** Delays for tinkering? **When is Judgement Day?:** April 1999

Klingon Honour Guard (microprose)

STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT has been canned, leaving MicroProse more time to concentrate on their other *Unreal* powered Trek tie-in. First impressions are good. Epic's technology has the power to amaze with its stunning lighting effects and textures, but it's in character detail that *Klingon Honour Guard* really excels.

From the Klingons to the Romulans, every race's facial features have been meticulously modelled, creating the most graphically faithful Trek game so far. Because the Cornish pasty-headed ones get main billing, bloodshed will be encouraged making *KHG* the first Trek game to negotiate a way around the licence's stringent rules on killing. Indeed, weaponry's said to include Klingon Bat'leths, as well as the Federation's phasers.



They're Klingons and they're guarding, but what's this 'honour' thing all about?

Greatest advantage: *Unreal* meets Star Trek. Nuff said.
Achilles heel: None of the familiar Star Trek cast feature.
When is Judgement Day?: March 1999

Requiem: Wrath Of The Fallen (cyclone)

Good God! That's just what the Hebrews thought. And Cyclone, so it would seem.

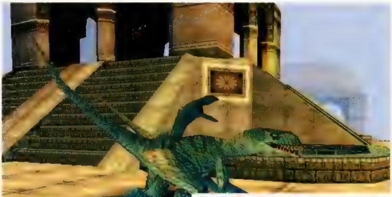
LOOKING AND SOUNDING more like Shiny's forthcoming *Messiah* than a standard first-person shooter, Cyclone's *Requiem* is a classic good vs evil tussle, with a distinctly religious bent. Playing the role of a good angel called Malachi, it's your job to save the whole of mankind from the Wrath of the Fallen. Tch, that old chestnut.

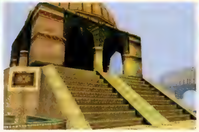
Requiem's dialogue and characterisation are said to play a large role in the unfolding storyline –to that end, the game is populated with many friendly NPCs, perhaps taking a leaf out of *Unreal's* book. Of course, as well as the chatty holier-than-thou types there will be hordes of devilish creatures out to eat your brains requiring immediate sanction. Uniquely, *Requiem's* combat requires the use of offensive, defensive and special angelic spells, including turning your enemies into pillars of salt, sending swarms of locusts to eat them, and blinding them. Billy Graham would be proud.

Cyclone assure us that *Requiem* will be "to first-person shooters, what sound was to silent films". What? Something that set them back 15 years artistically for the sake of a novelty? Hmm.

Greatest advantage: The religious twist's a novel one.
Achilles heel: Cyclone's only other release was *Uprising.*
When is Judgement Day?: September 1998

Turok 2: Seeds Of Evil (iguana)





These early *Turok 2* images show off those trademark dinos and wide open spaces.

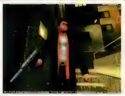
TUROK 2'S CALLING CARDS MUST surely be its huge bio-saurian beasts and its ludicrously devastating weapons, all set to improve on last year's original offering. The first game featured much that was likeable, including gorgeous graphics, fluid animation and sprawling, non-linear levels, but it was the two aforementioned qualities that really made it shine. Forget *Unreal's* guns – pulling the trigger in *Turok* produced far more satisfying results with the fusion cannon wiping out whole villages. The weapons available in *Turok 2: Seeds Of Evil* will number a smashing 23 and the gargantuan monsters will take on a much more outlandish, alien appearance this time round, although we hope that the massive cyborg T-Rex survives in some shape or form.

Elsewhere, the fogging that so dogged its predecessor is to be drastically reduced, and a full multi-player game will be available. Up to 16 people will be able to play, and the game should support Internet play via Acclaim's own master server. According to Iguana, the deathmatch levels will be a mixture of the N64 versions and PC-only arenas. Predictably, you'll need a 3D card to play the game, but native support for D3D, Glide and PowerVR should ensure that most accelerated PCs will be fine. One last thing – is *Turok* supposed to mean too rock?

Greatest advantage: Monsters and weapons. **Achilles heel:** Dodgy deathmatch. **When is Judgement Day?:** November 1998

(3D REALMS)

Max Payne

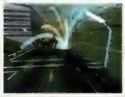


■ A weak name, perhaps, but *Max Payne* is set to be one of 1999's more sophisticated releases. Max is, of course, an undercover cop framed for a crime he didn't commit – more importantly, though, he's also one of the most fluidly animated characters we've seen in ages. *Max Payne's* environment is a hard-boiled copland, featuring subways, ghettos and disused warehouses, while the enemies are trench-coat wearing Cosa Nostra.

Greatest advantage: 3D Realms have the talent.
Achilles heel: *Prey* and *Duke* are sure to arrive before it.
When is Judgement Day?: Summer 1999

(MONOLITH)

Shogo: Mobile Armour Division

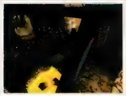


■ *Shogo used* to be called *Riot: Mobile Armour*. It *used* to use an engine call Direct Engine, but which has now been renamed LithTech. And it *used* to be published by Microsoft, until Monolith bought the rights to the engine and the game off them. Anime-themed, *Shogo's* full of huge Mech-style robot armour, massively over-the-top violence, and Japanese character names.

Greatest advantage: Those chunky robot suits.
Achilles heel: Perhaps more *MechWarrior* than *Quake*.
When is Judgement Day?: September 1998

(4D RULERS)

Gore

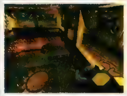


■ Attempting to meld the best elements of *Quake*, *Duke Nukem 3D* and *Doom*, 4D Rulers' little-known title is shaping up nicely. Still in the early stages (Christmas does sound very optimistic), *Gore's* AMP engine is shifting the demonic beasts and Gothic landscapes around incredibly smoothly, although they are sparsely populated right now. Each of its three episodes will have totally different themes and interactive hoverbikes and vehicles are promised.

Greatest advantage: Part One released as shareware.
Achilles heel: They may be trying to cram too much in.
When is Judgement Day?: Christmas 1998

(HUMAN SOFT)

Seed



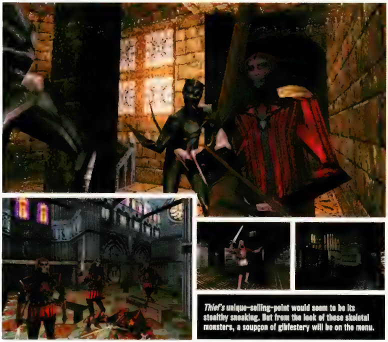
■ With an Invasion of the Body Snatchers-style storyline and a software-only engine, *Seed* is certainly one of the most curious 3D shooters we've seen. Plant-like aliens have destroyed the Earth with virulent seeds, and combat will apparently hinge on using coloured lighting as some light is deadly to your photosynthesising foes. Shadows play a large part, too, with certain doors, for example, opened by aligning your shadow with the frame.

Greatest advantage: Plants haven't been done before.
Achilles heel: And there's probably a reason for that.
When is Judgement Day?: October 1998

Thief: The Dark Project(Looking glass)

ORIGINALLY JUST CALLED *THE DARK Project*, E3 saw *Thief* shown to the world for the first time. Where all the other games in this round-up require more brute force than subtlety, *Thief* is simulating the silent and stealthy world of a thief about town. The 3D engine is mightily impressive and the team has developed artificial intelligence routines that link to the 3D engine. If you're in shadows, they won't respond, but as soon as you kick a pebble or step out, the medieval guards come running. The hand-to-hand combat models are being worked on to allow authentic, skilful sword fighting and it'll be possible to backstab guards, burgle houses, sell your treasures and generally do pretty much what you like. "We don't want to limit the player's actions," says Greg LoPiccolo, Looking Glass' Creative Director. "We're driving the story with our own plot, but we're making it possible for the player to complete these quests in as many ways as possible."

Taking on a guard head-on is fine, but there's always the option of dropping down from above, shooting them with an arrow from afar or just sneaking by. *Thief's* lighting effects are amongst the best we've seen (and they have to be, considering the impact they will have on the game itself), but the rest of the engine is capable of delivering realistic motion, huge scale and, best of all, a totally different look from the vast majority of 3D games arriving.

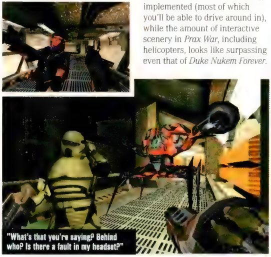


Thief's unique-selling-point would seem to be its stealthy sneaking. But from the look of these skeletal monsters, a soupçon of gibfestery will be on the menu.

Greatest advantage: Looking Glass' technology. **Achilles heel:** What will it run on? **When is Judgement Day?:** March 1999

Prax War(rebel boat rocker)

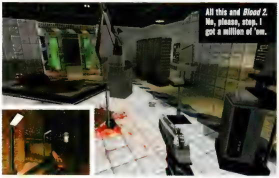
THE ALL-ENVELOPING Electronic Arts have snapped up this intriguing new shooter – the first release from a bunch of former-3D-Realms employees known by the ever-so-slightly embarrassingly moniker of Rebel Boat Rocker. Having written their own (very slick) engine and created a squad of five highly detailed allied characters with over ten weapons, RBR are currently slaving away on level designs. An assortment of vehicles are being implemented (most of which you'll be able to drive around in), while the amount of interactive scenery in *Prax War*, including helicopters, looks like surpassing even that of *Duke Nukem Forever*.



"What's that you're saying? Behind who? Is there a fault in my headset?"

Greatest advantage: Multiple enemies on screen at once.
Achilles heel: Will the level designers be up to the challenge?
When is Judgement Day?: Spring 1999

Blood 2: The Chosen(monolith)



All this and *Blood 2*. No, please, stop. I got a million of 'em.

THE OFT-DELAYED *BLOOD* finally deigned to appear a full two years after *Duke Nukem 3D*. Disappointingly, it had failed to move on in the technology stakes and what once looked like the next step forward turned out to be just more of the same. It's a mistake Monolith learned from and refuse to make again, the Texas-based outfit now placing their trust in the brand new Lithtech engine.

Having premiered *Blood 2* at E3, Jay Wilson, the game's Lead Designer, explained that an ambitious character modification system will feature. "Basically, players will be able to modify most of the stats of their character, including physical attributes like speed... what weapons and inventory items they carry, and the use of magic." Weaponry can also be upgraded, while 30 minutes of rendered cut scenes and dynamic mission structures are also promised. Although shown in a pre-alpha version at E3, *Blood 2's* already looking fast and packed with detail.

Greatest advantage: A guaranteed cult following.
Achilles heel: Can they get the technology right this time?
When is Judgement Day?: December 1998

Quake Arena (id)

Arena promises to be a multi-player *Quake* extravaganza and not a Duran Duran movie.

QUAKE III WAS DUE TO BE SHOWN AT E3 but was withdrawn at the 11th hour. The reason for this, we've since discovered, is that, most startlingly, it is no more. Following on from the announcement that *Trinity* was to be dropped, John Carmack has now revealed that Id's next project will be a predominantly multi-player affair entitled *Quake Arena*.

In a recent plan update, Carmack stated, "*Quake Arena* will consist exclusively of deathmatch-style gaming (including Capture the Flag and other derivatives). The single-player game will just be a progression through a ranking ladder against bot AIs *(see 'Bots' on p90)*. We think that can still be made an enjoyable game, but it is definitely a gamble."

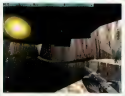
Carmack and co will plough their energies into further improving the multi-player experience of *Quake* which has, arguably, still to be bettered, while using an enhanced version of the *QII* engine. Whether due to the quality of the opposition, or simply expressing a preference for deathmatch-only play, Carmack said, "In the past, we have always been designing two games at once, the single-player game and the multi-player game, and they often had conflicting goals… time spent on monsters is time not spent on player movement. Time spent on unit goals is time not spent on game rules."

All of which bodes well for American Quakers – blessed as they are with free local phone calls. Perhaps less exciting news for European gamers, though…

Greatest advantage: Two words – Id and *Quake*. **Achilles heel:** Multi-player only. **When is Judgement Day?:** November 1998

(MICROPROSE)

X-COM: Alliance



■ With the *Unreal* engine under the bonnet, and the *X-COM* link, *Alliance's* success looks to be assured. The major innovation is that you're able to switch control between four characters, as well as giving the individual team members different orders to execute. As the excellent *Interceptor* proved, an *X-COM* game needn't be limited to isometric strategy – although a first-person, *Unreal*-powered engine will really test brand loyalty.

Greatest advantage: Name a bad *X-COM* game?
Achilles heel: Is *Alliance* too ambitious for its own good?
When is Judgement Day?: March 1999

(SEGA SOFT)

Vigilance

■ This James Bond-inspired shooter boasts a cast of eight secret agents, each of whom is equipped with a glut of hi-tech weaponry. Stealth will apparently be the order of the day, with much peering around corners and taking enemies out from a distance. The Anyworld engine is capable of neat lighting effects, and fluid skeletal animation system. Sega Soft are most proud of the enemy AI, though – enemies flee if they face superior firepower.

Greatest advantage: Could be as good as Connery.
Achilles heel: Or as feeble as Timothy Dalton.
When is Judgement Day?: September 1998

(TEAM TNT)

Nam

■ GT are the brave souls who've chosen to publish *Nam* – a 'realistic' simulation of the Vietnam conflict that uses the Build engine. You step into the boots of Alan 'The Bear' Westmoreland (sigh…), a US Marine Corps Sergeant and you must waste as many Viet Cong as possible as you traipse through paddy fields and jungles. GT say that the "ambience of warfare" is "almost too real to believe". Whoever said that the first casualty of war was truth?

Greatest advantage: The Yanks will buy it.
Achilles heels: The Build engine and Alan 'The Bear'.
When is Judgement Day?: August 1998

THE DECISION

KNOCKOUT!

■ The 3D battle has opened up massively in the last couple of years. What was once a fight between Id Software and 3D Realms has morphed into a scrap between any Tom, Dick or Harry start-up company thinking they can beat the masters. Clearly for most newcomers, this is a pipe dream. We obviously can't predict the outright winners yet, but we can say that *Prey*, *Duke Nukem Forever* and *Quake Arena* will be among them. From the rest, one of the *Quake II* engine licensees should come up trumps – a risky but satisfying bet would be *Half-Life*. Those fancying even longer odds might care to pop a couple of quid on *Thief: The Dark Project*. Which leaves us where? The status quo is likely to persist for the foreseeable future and technology will always dictate a game's 'wow' factor. Of this Top 30, perhaps 12 are destined for obscurity. And as for *Prey*, it is surely destined for greatness…

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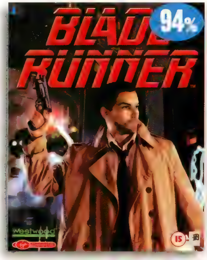
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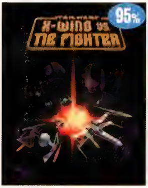
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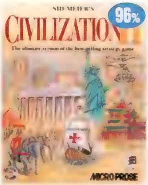
96%
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CIVILIZATION II
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IN SHORT

It's a lot cheaper to buy computer magazines in the UK.
Nick Stevens, London

It's even cheaper if you work for one.

Did you know, I was buying computer game mags before you were younger than me?
Gareth White, Preston

Have a cup of tea; we should.

Methinks it was a bit of a BooBoo!
Stewart McManus, Rickmansworth

Surely he was some kind of bear?

I have been reading your magazine for the last couple of years and think it's great, but this Christmas I noticed an irritant.
William Ball, Stamford

Just try not to scratch it. You'll only make it worse.

May I begin by congratulating you on a fantastic magazine that obliterates the deluge of opposition with grace and professionalism.
R Lang, London

You may begin like that and you're welcome to end like that as well.

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REMEMBER THE FILM

Last year, shortly after seeing Men In Black, I read about a forthcoming game tie-in. "Great!", I thought, and was relishing the chance to re-enact the antics of Messrs. Smith and Jones When the game finally arrived, I'd forgotten most of the film, and any "just-like-the-film ness" was lost on me.

However the situation is not unique to the above game. Rather, it seems to be a trend among all movie tie-ins that they be at least one and a half memory spans later than the film. *Star Trek: Generations*, for example, took light years to arrive, and both *Starship Troopers* and *Alien Resurrection* show few signs of life.

Since it takes roughly the same time to develop a game as it does to make a film, isn't it about time developers made full use of their licence by releasing their game at the same time as the film, so people who play the game can fully appreciate it?

Alex Butterworth, Guildford

Fair point. But developers often have to wait until they've seen the film before they can do the game, which means it's going to take time. Although history suggests they shouldn't have bothered in most cases.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

CONSISTENTLY MAKE LOSSES

ARE YOU BEING RIPPED OFF?

"Publishers warn that the danger of paying £30 for games is that you'll eventually get £20 games because the investment in development will have to be cut accordingly."

I was very disturbed to read your special report, "Are you being ripped off?", in your May issue as, I'm sure, were many other readers and PC game fans.

It seems PC games are heading for a major bust after the current boom. I remember reading before in PC GAMER how only a few major developers and publishers are ever sure of consistent profits – EA and Eidos being the ones that come to mind – and that most software companies consistently make losses. I had assumed that the PC games market was still growing, but this doesn't seem to be the case. Pricing wars between high street retailers are bringing everyone in the industry down, including the retailers themselves and, as PC games are currently less profitable than their console counterparts, they begin to lose shelf space altogether. How long until retailers neglect to stock any games at all? I would not object to shelling out half the amount again for games in future if it meant saving games from disappearing. That, in turn, would mean we'd have to be even more sure we're making the right choice, so we'd let you make the choices for us. The long-awaited advent of "less games but more quality" might still arrive.

Chris Mannion

An alternative scenario would have manufacturers making affordable PCs that work, and that ran the gleaming games of the future. Now that would be so popular there would be rioting in the streets.

Big movie licences. A Good Thing or A Perennially Late Thing As Nice As A Bag Of Owl Pellets?

UNBALANCED IMBECILE

I just had to respond to the e-mail you received from 'anon', entitled 'Sexual innuendo'. I think that anyone who complains about swearing is talking out of their a**e. 'Swearing' is a part of everyday society and anyone who disagrees is talking a load of old b******s. 'F**k' is in the dictionary, after all. Personally speaking, I don't believe that there's such a thing as swearing anymore, and anyway, it's an excellent form of expression. For example

"Oh dear, you unbalanced imbecile, you have just pranged my Porsche sports automobile."

Or

"You stupid idiotic f**k-up, you've just tw**ted the wing on my Porsche."

I rest my case.

Mike (aged 27)

PS. Love the mag, and love the 'bad language'.
PPS. Please print this, I get pissed off with all those narrow minded people that get offended by things like s**t, f**k, a**e, etc

Ah. An excellent case of supergluing your hands to the wrong end of the stick and swinging it madly around for all to see. Yes, swearing has become commonplace, for better or worse. But nonetheless, it has its place as a form of expression; we're aware that if you overuse it you'll rob it of its power and humour. The good ship GAMER is not a non-stop litany of foul-mouthery. The constant profanity you propose is hardly an acceptable alternative to lucid, intelligent discourse, and people will obviously be offended if you spew expletives every single minute of the day. Please join us for a game of Scrabble sometime.

A NAME IN THE CREDITS

I would like to comment on the editorial of your last issue, where you suggested that game programmers may become as highly regarded as movie stars or producers in the not-too-distant future. May I suggest that perhaps this is already prevalent today, where a name in the credits on the box can easily determine the success of a game.

I think we WILL see a very large increase in the popularity of top programmers while we see Hollywood celebrities take the back seat. Is it really a coincidence that public focus has moved – albeit slowly – from Hollywood stars and towards top scientists (Stephen Hawking), top businessmen (Bill Gates) and top programmers (John Carmack)? Maybe the public is wising up, and is beginning to realise the people who 'think' and produce a product are perhaps worthy of more attention than an actor who looks good on a cinema screen.

You hate *Star Wars: Supremacy*. Well, one of you does. We've heard it's mutual.

James Gillet, Rhyl

More importantly, it might have a knock-on effect that makes celebrities of all us hard-working hacks.

ONE OR TWO YEARS

I want to become employed at PC GAMER when I leave school. I am currently 15 years old and am taking my Standard Grades (the Scottish equivalent of GCSEs), and plan to stay on and do one or two years of higher education (A-Levels). Please can you give me some advice?

David Fennell, Dunblane

Well, providing you want to be involved in the writing side of things, excellent English is your top priority. Love games (hard, we know), know why you love games, and then try writing a review and sending in to Uncensored (p80).

SADLY LACKING

After reading the article "The Worst Games In The World, Ever!" in your April issue, I decided to send you the worst game I ever bought. *Star Wars: Supremacy* may be a slightly controversial choice, but when I pay £35 for a piece of software, I expect it to be excellent in both terms of graphics and gameplay. I found *Supremacy* to be sadly lacking in both of these areas.

LucasArts should hang their heads in shame as they watch what could have been an excellent game heading straight for the bargain bin to keep *Yoda Stories* company. When will we see a Star Wars game along the lines of *Command & Conquer* or *Starcraft*? Perhaps after those nutters at LucasArts have all had their lobotomies. Keep up the good work.

Phil Brabban, County Durham

Ed Ricketts would agree with you, but the constant facial tick he's developed since reviewing the game for us prohibits any coherent speech on his part.

IN SHORT

I think that if LucasArts release another stinker of a Star Wars game, the licence will become a watchword for purchasing caution rather than an immediate must-have in a PC games collection.

Laurence Meynell, Ceredigion

Very true. Although* Supremacy *is terribly useful for hitting burglars around the head, which is always our definition of a quality game.

Thanks for reading this to the end and remember it would practically be charity to help me out.

James Allen, Henley-On-Thames

We're not practical.

PC GAMER

NEXT MONTH

Unlike many lucky European nations, the UK has to work right through their miserable summer. This is, in fact, a deliberate ploy to prevent the populous watching their sporting 'heroes' in action. So, as we miss the UK's Wimbledon challenge, the down-under rugby tour, the riots in France and our brave boys in white failing to connect willow with leather, we sit back and anticipate this little lot.

RACING GAME SPECIAL

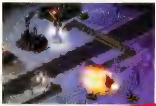
We take *GP Legends* and *Colin McRae Rally* for a spin around the block.

THE CITY OF LOST GAMES

Discover the millions that have been wasted making games you'll never see.

THE TOP 20 STRATEGY GAMES

Can anyone compete with *Tiberian Sun* this Christmas? We find out...



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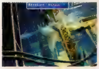
THE OFFICIAL PC GAMER TOP 20

There's 'long', there's 'awaited' and then there's *Final Fantasy VII* and *Unreal*. But who'd have thought the Japanese opus would have pipped Epic's epic to the top. EA's footie game debuts high too.



1	NEW	Final Fantasy VII	Eidos
2	NEW	Unreal	GT
3	(4)	Forsaken	Acclaim
4	NEW	World Cup 98	EA
5	(2)	Incoming	Rage
6	(5)	Tomb Raider II	Eidos
7	(10)	Starship Titanic	Zablac
8	(8)	Quake II	Activision
9	(1)	Ultimate Soccer Manager 98	Sierra
10	(12)	Flight Simulator 98	Microsoft
11	(13)	TOCA Touring Car Championship	Codemasters
12	(7)	Grand Theft Auto	BMG
13	NEW	X-COM: Interceptor	MicroProse
14	(6)	Star Wars: Supremacy	Virgin
15	NEW	Sensible Soccer	GT
16	(20)	Formula 1 '97	Psygnosis
17	(14)	Age Of Empires	Microsoft
18	RE	Men In Black	Gremlin
19	NEW	Army Men	Ubi Soft
20	(16)	Battlezone	Activision

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Having a siesta

Watch them go! Over the horizon like rabid wolves, they run as fast as we can type. This is the last we heard of them...

Alpha Centauri	EA	**November**
Aliens vs Predator	Fox	**November**
Black & White	EA	**Summer 1999**
Civilization III	MicroProse	**September 1999**
Call To Power	Activision	**January 1999**
Constructor 2	Acclaim	**February 1999**
Daikatana	Eidos	**Late September**
Duke Nukem Forever	GT	**March 1999**
Dungeon Keeper II	EA	**December**
Falcon 4.0	MicroProse	**November**
Final Fantasy VII	Eidos	**July**
Grand Prix Legends	Sierra	**September**
Grim Fandango	LucasArts	**October**
Half-Life	CUC	**October**
Hardwar	Gremlin	**August**
Magic & Mayhem	Virgin	**September**
Populous 3	EA	**April**
SimCity 3000	EA	**November**
Sin	Activision	**September**
Starcraft	Blizzard	**March**
Total Annihilation 2: Kingdoms	GT	**December**
Warcraft III	Blizzard	**November 1999**
Wargasm	DID	**December**

YOUR MOST WANTED

Calm down about *Tiberian Sun*. You'll get overtired and have to go and lie down.

It's a tale of two games as far as you're concerned with *Duke Nukem Forever* and *Tiberian Sun* hogging a massive 50% of the votes for themselves. *Grim Fandango* is a comfortable third, and it's a hearty hello again to *Civilization III*. And someone, somewhere is getting palpitations over the forthcoming Bondian extravaganza, *Tomorrow Never Dies*. Lucky winner TJ Kember from Yatton will drive everyone mad for weeks impatiently waiting for a copy of *Grim Fandango* to hit the doormat.

POS.	GAME WANTED	VOTE SHARE
1	C&C: Tiberian Sun	31%
2	Duke Nukem Forever	19%
3	Grim Fandango	12%
4	Half-Life	9%
5	Civilization III	7%
6	Sin	5%
7	Populous: The Beginning	3%
8	Descent 3	2%
9	Hostile Waters	1.5%
10	Tomorrow Never Dies	1%

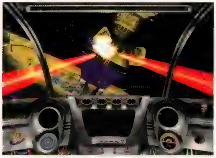
Send your Most Wanted votes to: **My Most Wanted, PC GAMER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.**

PC GAMER RECOMMENDED

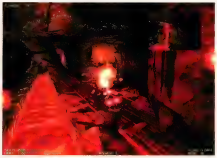
We love these games and so will you. Buy them, take them home, smear them in Haägen Dazs and take lots of Polaroids.

Unreal GT **(PCG 56 94%)**
Worth the wait? Oh yes. Remarkable not only for its unprecedented graphics, stunning sound and vast levels, but also its smashing set pieces. The first encounter is worth the entry alone. A door that won't quite open, bloodcurdling screams, blood hitting the floor, oh dear...

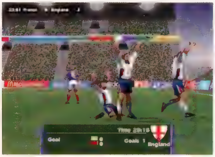
Total Annihilation GT **(PCG 48 94%)**
Until *Tiberian Sun* arrives, *TA* still stands at the very zenith, pinnacle, apex and toppermost bit of real-time strategy gaming, sweeping all before it like a very large broom. The release of the *Core Contingency* add-on has confirmed its excellence, and further diminished our feeble social lives.



X-COM: Interceptor MicroProse **(PCG 58 90%)**
Taking all that made previous *X-COM* games great and fusing it with *X-Wing*-esque real-time space combat can't have been an easy feat, but MicroProse succeeded beyond all our expectations. Direct an entire war and fight in it, too. The moon on a stick, indeed, and all inside your PC.



Forsaken Acclaim **(PCG 57 93%)**
It looks unnaturally gorgeous. It moves like a particularly smooth dream. The weapons are as effective as they are beautiful. Level design is jolly nice, as is freedom of movement. The way the enemies spin out of control is also an attractive bonus. This is *Forsaken*. Buy it.



World Cup 98 Electronic Arts **(PCG 57 91%)**
The first match of the World Cup saw diminutive Scot and Deputy Editor Mark Donald crying into his lager-top as Brazil walked away with a 2-1 win. Fortunately (for us), we can force Mark to relive this moment whenever he annoys us, thanks to EA's spotless rendition of the beautiful game.

Quake II Activision **(PCG 51 96%)**
"It's a freakin' gibfest, man!" as only our American cousins can say, sans irony. Six months on and it's still riding high in the recommended box, as befits the game that claimed the Number One spot in last issue's Top 100. And, truly, what higher recommendation can there be?

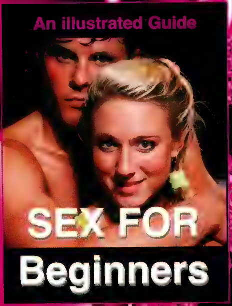
SLIPPAGE CENTRAL

Where we pay homage to the games that demonstrate an uncanny ability to never be released...

Duke Nukem Forever (3D Realms/GT)
There's little doubt in our minds about the final game, but just when will we see it? First scheduled for release three months ago, then September (due to upgrading to the *Quake II* engine) and we now receive news that we'll be twiddling our thumbs until at least next March (as they change the engine again to *Unreal's*). Brave move, but let's pray it doesn't turn into another *Unreal*.

Heart Of Darkness (Amazing Studios/Ocean)
An honorary mention for The King Of Slippage. *Heart Of Darkness* was started before the magazine PC GAMER existed. To celebrate its imminent release (we should have a full review next month) we welcome it to our exclusive little club like Cilla Black coos over a stranger's long-lost brother-in-law. Five years in the making, two publishers and a rumoured Stephen Spielberg film tie-in, *Heart Of Darkness* has never been short of attention – just progress. But congratulations Amazing Studios – you've done it at last.

Some things
explained
to be ex


An illustrated Guide
SEX FOR
Beginners

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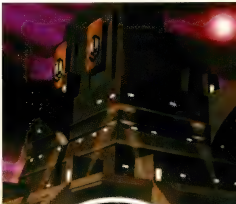
ALPHA CENTAURI



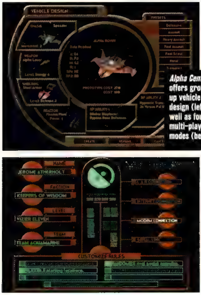
It's the end of *Civilization* as we know it. The 'real' sequel to the strategy classic is set to lose us in space as effectively as its forefathers did on Earth.

By JAMES FLYNN

With *Alpha Centauri*, Firaxis are determined to take a leap forward from the *Civ* series in visual presentation as well as in complexity.

CIV II's Greco-Roman hold on gamers throughout the world is epitomised by the fact that currently no less than *three* companies are claiming to be working on the sequel. Activision, who earlier this year triumphantly announced they'd acquired the rights to the name *Civilization*, now realise they were a tad hasty, have gulped down a chunk of foul-tasting pie and are now almost certain to call their game *Call To Power* and just make it *like Civilization.* MicroProse *are* working on *Civilization III*, but only God has any idea when it will arrive. Meanwhile, Firaxis, the software company founded by *Civ I* and *Civ II* duo Sid Meier and Brian Reynolds, are completing work on the true sequel, *Alpha Centauri*, which picks up right where *Civ II* left off. So that's clear then.

What's much more apparent is that *Alpha Centauri* sounds marvellous. Project Leader Brian Reynolds modestly states his aim: "The basic idea behind *Alpha* is very simple - we're going to make the best strategy game of all time. We've taken on board fan requests and our own experiences and have come up with a game that has more scope, more depth, more AI, more challenges and more things to discover."



Alpha Centauri offers ground-up vehicle design (left) as well as four multi-player modes (below).

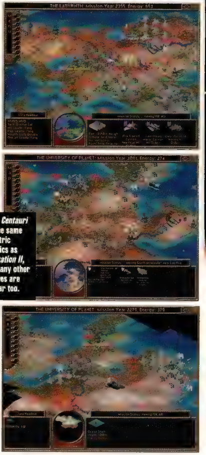
START FROM THE FINISH

The basic premise will be familiar to those 1.5 million people who have finished *Civilization II*. Human society has disintegrated and the UN has dispatched a spaceship to a planet orbiting Alpha Centauri. En route it is smacked by a meteor and the crew fragments into seven ideological factions – technocrats, economists, religious zealots, environmentalists and so on. Thus, when you land all is not well and you can either choose to be a leader of a faction or establish a new ideology.

This is conceptually similar to *Civilization* but there is a reason for this, as Reynolds explains "We're staying proudly turn-based in an industry that is flooded by real-time games. We believe there is still a big market for games where a player has time to consider their decisions and agonise over the choices, but we also think we've combined a great turn based game with a great multi-player game."

Central to fulfilling this promise is *Alpha Centauri's* artificial intelligence. "We specialise in AI here," says Reynolds. "For months we program using an ugly testbed containing all the game's elements. We just start teaching it using what we call the iterative method – we set off on turn one and see where the AI makes a mistake. We fix that, go back to the start, then repeat the process and get it going a little further. We've been working on the AI alone for *Alpha Centauri* for almost two years now."

On the way from *Civ II* to *Alpha Centauri* things went pear-shaped and people had their own ideas about running things. Firaxis, that is.


THE LABYRINTH: Mission Year 2355, Energy: 693
THE UNIVERSITY OF PLANET: Mission Year 2001, Energy: 274
THE UNIVERSITY OF PLANET: Mission Year 2279, Energy: 379

Alpha Centauri has the same isometric graphics as *Civilization II*, and many other features are familiar too.

"Graphically, *Alpha Centauri* is Firaxis' most accomplished game. The new fractal generation engine allows you to change the planet itself through terra-forming."

The result is a mass of features, making this more than just a game of military conquest (although being able to design your own vehicles from the chassis up will put a fresh spin on this area). There is also scope for social engineering on a grand scale letting you choose to be ruthless or idealistic, deciding to back public or private health, have conscript armies or voluntary armies or opt for a pro industry or pro environment stance. These are just a few of the many decisions to be made in *Alpha Centauri* and how you approach such issues will affect how your people thrive both physically and emotionally.

To cope with this, the diplomatic and social AI routines have evolved into contrasting personalities. They 'talk' in different ways and have completely their own agendas. You'll be able to share technology, money, and make peace treaties with the other neighbours, but on a far grander scale than in *Civs I* and *II*. There is a Planetary Council screen where you can debate issues, buy friends, pool resources, trade votes, but you should try to get elected planetary governor to give you more sway in global issues.

CHANGE THE WORLD

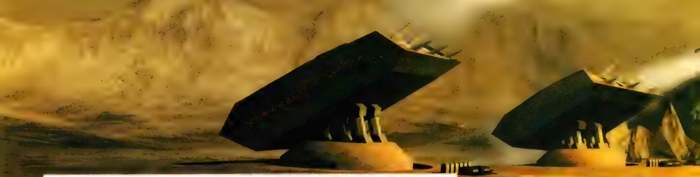
Graphically, *Alpha Centauri* is Firaxis' most accomplished game. The new fractal generation engine allows you to change the planet itself through terra-forming so you'll be able to melt polar icecaps to raise sea levels and submerge enemy bases. You can also raise mountains to change the rainfall patterns in the area, alter the course of rivers, build land bridges and engage in various other forms of ecological warfare and salvation. However, if you take this too far, you'll suffer the combined wrath of the other factions. With enough technology you *can* commit some truly nasty atrocities using nerve gas, genetic warfare or even the 'planet buster', but the diplomatic consequences will involve others declaring war on you for violating international conventions. By contrast, a minor atrocity might see economic sanctions imposed on you.

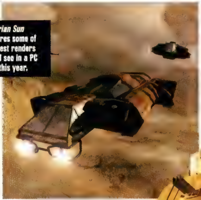
Reynolds concludes: "There are so many options, but in each case we've gone out of our way to avoid promoting a single 'right' answer. As you create your vision of future society, each choice has positive and negative consequences, and the choice between good and evil will rarely be black and white."

LATEST ON...

C&C 2: TIBERIAN SUN

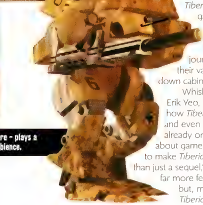
In restaurants, *C&C 2* means two lots of chicken and chips. The game's just as tasty. **By MATTHEW PIERCE**





Tiberian Sun features some of the best renders you'll see in a PC title this year.

Coloured lighting – even in software – plays a large part in *C&C 2's* effective ambience.



HAVING brought you the first look at this, the year's biggest sequel, we made it our business to have a further nose around the Westwood stand at E3.

Unsurprisingly, it was *Tiberian Sun* that was gaining the most attention – particularly from overweight American journos trying to cram their vast buttocks into the sit-down cabinet displaying the game. Whisking its Lead Designer, Erik Yeo, aside, we discovered how *Tiberian Sun's* progressing, and even more reasons why it's already one of the most talked about games ever. "We've strived to make *Tiberian Sun* much more than just a sequel," says Yeo. "There are far more features than *Red Alert*, but, more importantly, *Tiberian Sun* is going to be massive fun to play."

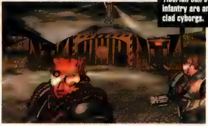
Although the game again features the NOD and GDI warring factions from the original *C&C*, *Tiberian Sun* is significantly different from its predecessors in almost every area

SHOCK TACTICS

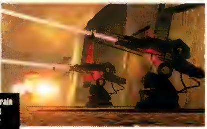
Westwood's revelation that they weren't going to use polygons for units or true line-of-sight was initially a shock. After all, Cavedog had proved the merit of using both in *Total Annihilation*, and Westwood's staunch refusal to copy the latest RTS gaming trend seemed, at the time, naive, if not a little foolish

However, it's a decision Yeo stands by, maintaining that the fundamental game elements in the original *C&C* are still sufficient to create a complex, testing strategy game – with the emphasis on fun. Yeo continues, "At first, we put line-of-sight in, but soon found that all the AI routines needed to accomplish it had a major effect on the game's pace. In the end, we decided not to compromise the swift action that has always defined *Command & Conquer* games"

Similarly, polygons were discounted early on as a way of modelling the game's units and structures. Instead, voxels (essentially 3D pixels) are used. The result is that the game remains speedy even when multiple units are being displayed unlike *TA*, which slowed to a crawl when the screen was asked to deal with manifold vehicles



Due to the hostile environment, all of *Tiberian Sun's* infantry are armour-clad cyborgs.



"You'll see a definite advancement on the previous games' AI. It's far more adaptive now, and it's amazing to see it create new solutions to players' tactics."

In terms of AI, *Tiberian Sun* also looks to be a significant improvement over its rivals. Although *Red Alert's* variety of CPU-controlled responses remains superior to *TA's*, Westwood have spent an inordinate amount of time tweaking the system.

"In *Tiberian Sun*, you'll see a definite advancement on the previous games' AI. It's far more adaptive now, and it's amazing to see it create new solutions to players' tactics."

Other areas of the game are progressing in a similarly rapid way. Almost all of the NOD and GDI structures are complete, and the simple upgrading process (with offensive and defensive 'pods' added to the basic fabrications of buildings) looks like genuinely adding a new element to the genre.

With one of the two types of Tiberium ore being too unstable to build on, space for constructing bases is more limited than before, necessitating the need to think about your base's positioning far more so than before.

"In this game, you'll find well-constructed, large maps that give you a real sense of drama. Ice that melts during the game cuts off portions of the maps changing the face of the landscape in real-time. The terrain's also a lot more deformable – an aspect that can give rise to new strategies."

Deformable terrain means different tactics, and far more complex graphics.

EASY ACCESS

More good news involves the game's multi-player aspect. Westwood are committed to making the online and networked games as easy to set up and full of features as possible.

"The interfaces, connections and options will all be cut down to make it as easy as possible to set up. There's going to be loads of multi-player options, including in-built support for clans, and automatically updating ranking ladders."

Can *Tiberian Sun* fail? It seems unlikely. Even though *Total Annihilation* and *Dark Reign* advanced the genre, *C&C 2* is packing enough in to satisfy both hardcore RTS fans as well as less experienced strategists. Watch this space for more very soon.

HARDWAR

After a development marathon, *Hardwar* is approaching the finishing line.

By JAMES FLYNN

If Gremlin were EA, they'd have Bruce Willis in *Hardwar*. It'd make a good film name, though.

PAUL Woakes' *Mercenary* and David Braben and Ian Bell's *Elite* are both assured a place in gaming history. If Gremlin's *Hardwar* can capture and combine their individual strengths to satisfy the demands of '90s gamers, it too should join them in the Hall of Fame.

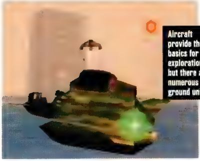
"It's certainly been a long time," laughs *Hardwar's* Producer, Ade Carless, "but there's so much in *Hardwar* now that it all seems worth the effort." The laugh is justified – *Hardwar* was originally due to see the light of day last April, but was held back for technical and content reasons. A year later, it's not that easy to see the cosmetic changes, but behind the scenes the team have been constantly developing the fundamentals, adding new features and balancing the whole experience.

POWER
RECHARGE
POWER DRAIN
SHIELDS
STRUCTURE
169 FT

Hardwar's action and graphical prowess is not in doubt. Let's hope the game is as splendid.

"You have access to 5 ships, 25 weapons and an amazing 60 versions of the head-up-display software."

Your role in *Hardwar*, as in *Elite*, is to accrue wealth through trading goods, salvaging, and hiring your services out. This cash is used to further your influence by giving you access to one of the game's 5 ships, 25 weapons and an amazing 60 versions of the head-up-display software. The ultimate aim (à la *Mercenary*) is to escape the planet Titan's gravity and get into space.

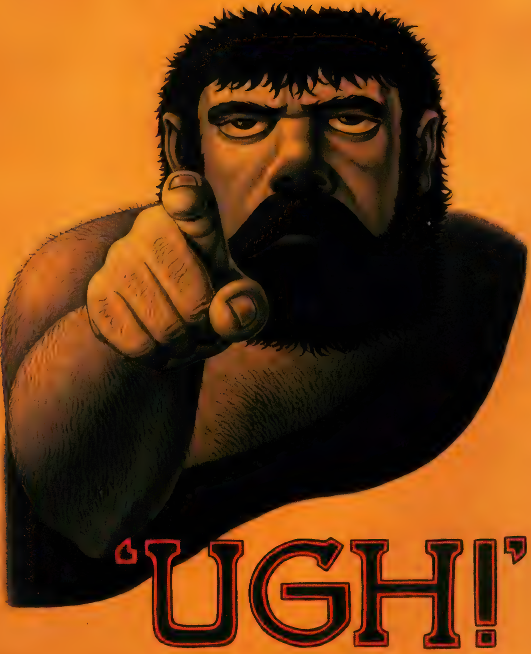


Aircraft provide the basics for your exploration, but there are numerous ground units.

A TITANIC STRUGGLE

The past year has been largely spent on making Titan a world worth exploring. The three main groups on the planet – the Free Traders, the Factions and the Police – now all have completed AI and interact freely without the player even being there. Dropping the player into the mix will engross them in the 30 almost complete single-player missions. These are built to push a story and include escort missions, defusing bombs, locating lost items and pure exploration, but within this narrative it is possible to travel freely and perform any actions you like.

Hardwar's day-night cycle (as every craft is solar powered they all function more effectively when it is light) has been fine-tuned and the light wells which provide night-time charging have been placed strategically around the city. *Hardwar's* infrastructure has also been finalised and the world is complete, decked out with supply stations, docking platforms, e-mail terminals and the rest of the equipment required to bring the team's vision of futuristic adventure trading to your PC. Let's hope it's as good as it looks.



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PC CD

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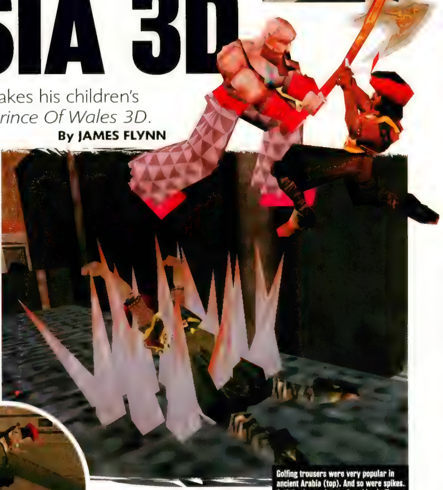
LATEST ON...

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D

A bitter, big-eared man makes his children's lives a misery. No, that's *Prince Of Wales 3D*.

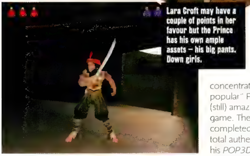
By JAMES FLYNN



Golfing trousers were very popular in ancient Arabia (top). And so were spikes. And they're easier to clean blood off.

PRINCE *Of Persia* **is one of the most influential games of all time. A slick, smooth flip-screen platform game, *POP* – as it came to be known – brought a level of refinement to games that players had previously only dreamed of when it first appeared back in 1989. Ten years on, most titles are still lacking those qualities.**

"We've been waiting for the technology to become available for the game we had in mind," explains Jordan Mechner, the Prince's creator. "It's only been recently we've seen the 3D power required to fulfil the vision of a '90s *Prince Of Persia*." As the name suggests, and in common with a host of other classic updates, this implies a no holds barred translation to 3D. Comparisons with *Tomb Raider* are inevitable (and totally justified) but bear in mind the fact that, ironically, *Tomb Raider* was originally criticised for being 'just' a 3D version *Prince Of Persia* (such was the pervasive hold that *POP* had on the collective memory of veteran gamers).



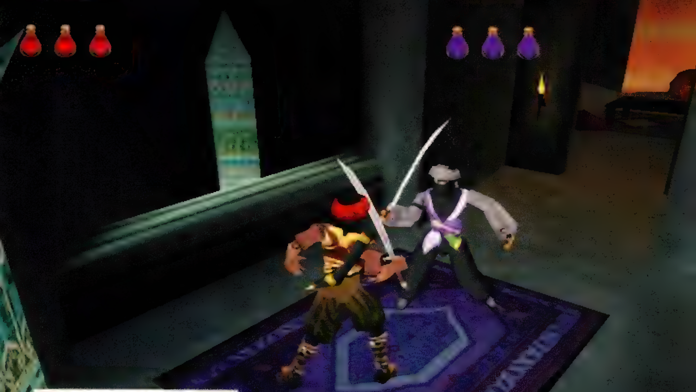
Lara Croft may have a couple of points in her favour but the Prince has his own ample assets – his big pants. Down girls.

BULGING BICEPS

"We are remaining true to the original," says Mechner, "and that means we are concentrating on what made *Prince Of Persia* so popular." Foremost among these qualities was the (still) amazingly smooth animation throughout the game. The Prince walked, ran, jumped, fought and completed almost every one of his actions with total authenticity. To retain this fluidity, Mechner and his *POP3D* team have brought in the services of an international male gymnast, who has been motion captured performing basic manoeuvres plus pull-ups, fencing, archery and other, more atypical actions.

To translate this to the screen the team has licensed two separate pieces of technology – an unusual decision in today's development community. The first of these, *Motivator*, is specifically charged with converting the motion capture data to produce smooth polygons for the Prince and his enemies. The second covers just about everything else you see on the screen. *NetImmerser* is a 3D engine bought 'off the shelf' to satisfy the game's needs. Apparently, *Quake II* was an engine Red Orb were considering licensing, but it wasn't flexible enough to cope with *Prince's* myriad requirements.

The 3D engine is easily as technically accomplished as *Tomb Raider's*. It offers a full range of fogging, transparency and coloured

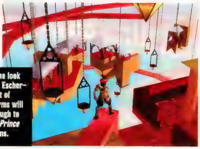


Tense, skilful sword fights with palace guards feature heavily in *Prince Of Persia 3D.*

"The spirit of *Prince Of Persia 3D* is true to the original, but the whole game has been executed with a much greater degree of finesse as befits a 1998 title."

lighting to spruce up the wonderful looking levels "A coherent environment is vital to us," states Mechner "We're busy designing Arabian themed cities, plazas, tunnels and castles, with an eye to drawing the player into the world as fully as possible" Crucial to this will be the story another feature pioneered by the original *POP* which is still undervalued in many of today's games

Prince Of Persia 3D will take up where the lesser spotted *Prince Of Persia 2* ended You have rescued the princess, married her and are about to settle down for some quality time together when wouldn't you just know it – she's kidnapped again (What's that proverb? Once is misfortune, twice is coincidence and three times is an obvious need to make money from another sequel?) This time the princess has been snatched by her parents and another powerful family who have an arranged marriage set up for her



Just one look at this Escher-like set of platforms will be enough to scare *Prince* veterans.

HEIRS AND GRACES

The spirit of *Prince Of Persia 3D* is true to the original, but the whole game has been executed with a much greater degree of finesse as befits a 1998 title. Andrew Pedersen, *POP3D's* Senior Producer explains: "We loved the one-on-one combat of the original and are keen to retain the skill and ease of use here. For each weapon there will be three attacking moves, each of which is more powerful or easier to pull off or faster There will also be defensive moves along a similar line" Combat will remain as lethal and as true to life as the original's, where one successful hit meant death However, the Prince will no longer be restricted to just a sabre as certain enemies, traps and puzzles will be better neutralised using a bow and arrow, for example. This variety is a most welcome introduction, as are the increased number of healing potions dotted around the labyrinthine levels

The original *Prince Of Persia's* other notable feature was its variety of deadly traps, and veteran gamers will be relieved to hear that the famous falls and spikes will remain but this time they'll be a little better sign posted "It's a tricky balance," admits Mechner. "Much of *Prince's* enjoyment came from the difficulty and from having to know the levels. We don't want to lose that, but it also has to be accessible to everyone." With another ten months of development remaining, the Prince seems certain to step back into the limelight. PCG

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She whispers in your ear.

Malcolm.

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White Label. Sorry.

IGNITION

Screamer 2

RESIDENT EVIL™

THE WHITE LABEL

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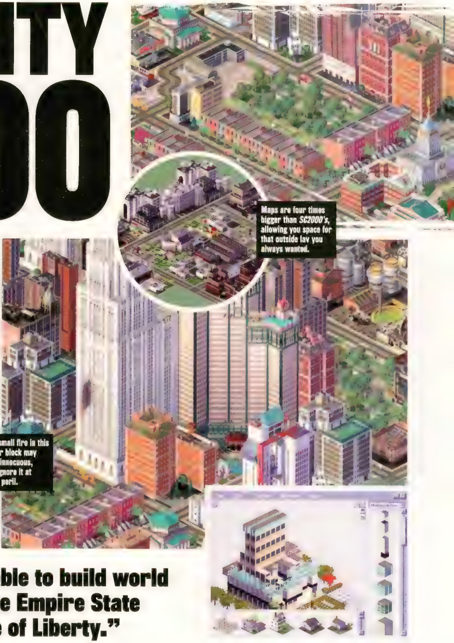
LATEST ON...

SIM CITY 3000

Six million copies sold in twelve languages and still no-one's completed it. It could only be *SimCity*.

By JAMES FLYNN



Maps are four times bigger than *SC2000's*, allowing you space for that outside lav you always wanted.

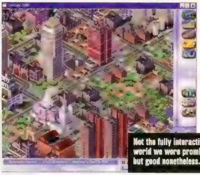
The small fire in this tower block may look innocuous, but ignore it at your peril.

WIL Wright, creator of *SimCity*, used to have a great answer-phone message. It went something like this: "Hello [pause] er, hello... hello... are you there...? Well *I'm* not right now so leave a message after the tone." Well, it's funny the first time.

Rather like *SimCity 2000* in fact. Wil Wright created the game you could never officially win but one where you judged yourself constantly. It appealed to aspiring town-planners, down-on-their-luck accountants [sic] and students with nothing better to do – a populous trio, which probably explains why it sold so well. Now it's only four months before *SimCity 3000* is upon us

At the recent E3 show we had a lengthy play and can report that the basics are reassuringly unchanged. After the failed promise of a full 3D world, the intricately detailed isometric view (complete with five levels of zoom) satisfies all our requirements anyway, particularly considering the amount of new SimSocial data which is crammed into the SimGame. This backs up the ability to play on a SimMap four times larger than those in *SimCity 2000* and import SimReal terrain data based on major world (i.e. US) cities. As mayor you'll be able to build world landmarks such as the Empire State Building or the Statue of Liberty and terraform the area with waterways, mountains or forests more than ever before.

"As mayor you'll be able to build world landmarks such as the Empire State Building or the Statue of Liberty."



Not the fully interactive 3D world we were promised, but good nonetheless.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOURS

Perhaps most importantly, there will now be the option to proactively interact with your neighbouring cities. Until now they have just come across as leeches on your population if you perform too well, but it will be possible to share water, power and even responsibility for collecting rubbish. So if you want a reputation as the world's cheapest dustbin, just sign on as Margaret and take anything that comes your way for a couple of quid

In a similar vein, your SimCitizens will be more adventurous in proposing new constructions and requesting certain zones to be earmarked as 'historical' (and therefore protected). Like the Army Base in *SimCity 2000*, these additions will affect the way your dream-town develops

All's looking good, and if Mr Wright can incorporate more feedback on your decisions, he could have a SimTastic game on his hands

LATEST ON...

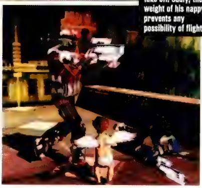
MESSIAH

Rumour has it that having caught a glimpse of his reflection in a mirror, Dave Perry decided to call his new game *Messiah*...

By MATTHEW PIERCE

You've got to admire the creative talents of some of *Messiah's* characters. Why, this lady's created an outfit simply out of shoelaces, cobwebs and fur.

(Below) Bob, your friendly neighbourhood cherub, attempts to take off. Sadly, the weight of his nappy prevents any possibility of flight.



DESPITE its innovations, *MDK* failed to set the gaming world alight. The masses judged it a little *too* strange (even though it was, in essence, a third-person shooter), preferring to wait until a scantily clad, pneumatically mammaried bird could be thought of, and placed in a similar game.

Almost 18 months since the release of *MDK*, then, Shiny are once again on the brink of their latest, startlingly novel release – the eminently weird *Messiah*

Simply put, *Messiah* is a third-person strategy shoot-'em-up starring a cherub. It's a typically 'good vs evil' story-line, with your ultimate goal being to take on the horned one himself. That's all anyone's ever really known about *Messiah* Because, as Shiny's President, Dave Perry, explained, "That's all we've ever told anyone about it."

"A long time has been spent developing *Messiah's* technology, and now we're ready to start implementing the gameplay elements. It's got the potential to be the most violent game you've ever seen."

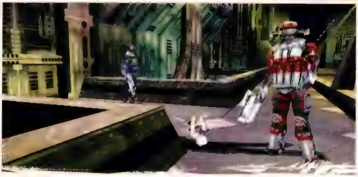
Having been the toast of the recent CGDC (a conference for game developers) – with its Lead Programmer, Rev Sax, being hailed by many as the new John Carmack Perry demonstrated the game content behind *Messiah's* stunning animations and industrial environments

"Really, the cherub is only a small part of the game," Perry begins. "Obviously a little baby wouldn't stand a chance against soldiers with weapons, so you have to employ strategies rather than simply attacking them."

WATCH YOUR BACK

These 'strategies' turn out to be some of the most horrific ways you could think of to dispatch your enemies, all working on the theory that you as a be-winged cherub can take control of your victims' bodies. By flying into the back of your

With a subtle beat of his wings, Bob 'nutmegs' the hapless armoured fiend. "Ha!" he shouts. Before being stamped on.



A group of guards get ready to play Pass the Parcel, oblivious to the danger behind them.

"It's got the potential to be the most violent game you've ever seen."

chosen quarry, you instantly gain control of that new character, meaning you gain their strengths, weaknesses and any objects they're carrying. And it's in this way, rather than by employing traditional 'shooting and running' means, that progress is made through the game.

Killing a group of soldiers, for instance, could be achieved in many ways. After possessing one of them, the options would be to either engage the other, unsuspecting brutes with your new weapon, or simply walk away into some flames or a mincing machine. By flying out of the slowing, dying body, you could then float away unharmed. It's a game concept that, although in its early stages, promises a fresh twist on the third-person genre, offering something refreshingly different to the so far obligatory recipe of bigger and better gun collecting.

Messiah wouldn't be commanding so much attention if it weren't for the game engine, though. Although appearing quite dour and depressing in the light of *Unreal*, what *Messiah* loses in imaginative textures and lighting effects, it gains in animation and speed.

As the 'ladies' adverts tell us, having wings is essential these days. We don't really understand why, though.

SHE'S GOT PERFECT SKIN

The unique system used to model the game's characters is truly revolutionary. Although polygons are still employed, each protagonist is made up of both a 'skeleton' as well as a 'skin'. By stretching the skins over the skeletons rather than simply building them up polygon by polygon, the effect achieved is one of smooth curves and realistic movement. Out go the sharp edges of typical 3D game's characters, and in come genuinely shapely models; it's the perfect system to best display Shiny's obvious leanings towards excessively buxom females.

Perhaps more importantly, though, the engine is also truly scaleable. The amount of polygons used to represent each character increases or decreases on the fly according to how close they are, while the game will also add levels of detail according to the hardware present in your PC.

Shiny reckon that in a couple of years' time, with the benefit of ever improving system specs, *Messiah* will look better than even *they* have seen it run. Of course, Perry could be telling porkies but only time will tell. As for now, Shiny are focusing on level design and structuring the game's objectives.

It's a curious one, for sure, and there's a danger that *Messiah* could become a victim of its own original ideas; *MDK* demonstrated that the game-buying public are fickle people at the best of times. We sincerely hope it works though. If only to say we told you so. PCG

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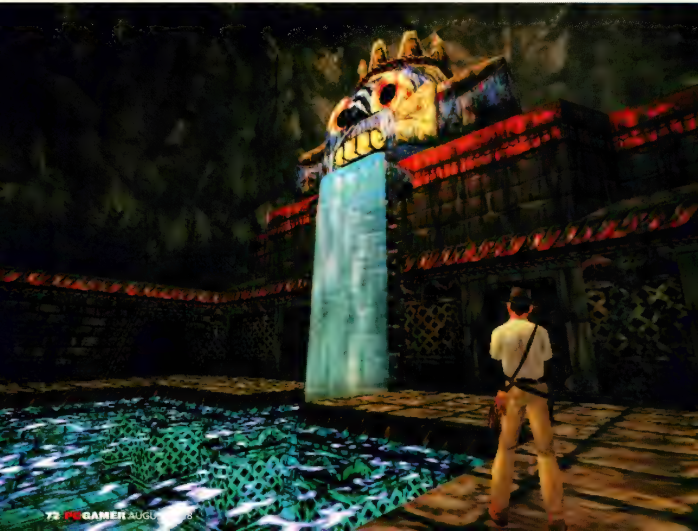
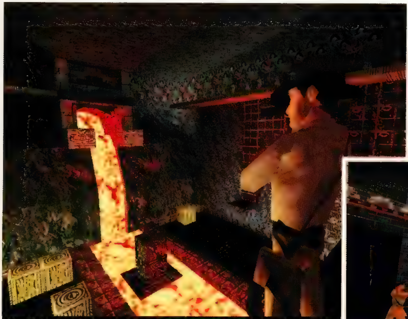
INDIANA JONES

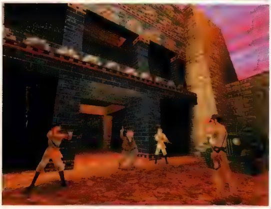
And The Infernal Machine

Be excited. The original action hero is coming to your hard drive, and he doesn't need silicon implants.

By JES BICKHAM







(Above) Indy stands, arms folded, head cocked at a thoughtful angle: "Hmm. What would Lara Croft do?" (Right) The bane of every adventurer – a short, fat middle-management type. "Ah! Dr Jones! So pleased to see you. Despite my lack of height and corpulent girth, let me assure you that I pose quite a serious threat. I lift my arm in the air to prove it." "You're an idiot." "Yes, I know." "That's all right, then."

HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU THINK that it's possible to be surprised in one year? There must be a limit to it - to how much pleasure we can take in such a relatively short time. And so it happened that our frail forms, racked and ruined from all the surprises of the year so far (the excellence of *Unreal*, the news of *Giants*, *X COM: Alliance*, *Black and White* and *Dungeon Keeper II*, to name a few) imploded with ecstasy as LucasArts whispered - in a voice that sounded like fingernails on glass - but two words in our ears.

And those words were...

"Indiana Jones."

"Snakes. I hate snakes"

Think of lovely Lara Croft. Think of the two - soon to be three - games that she's starred in. Remember the scenario of each? A female archaeologist and dilettante plunders the arse end of civilisation for sacred relics. Sound familiar? Lara Croft wants to be Indy so hard that it hurts.

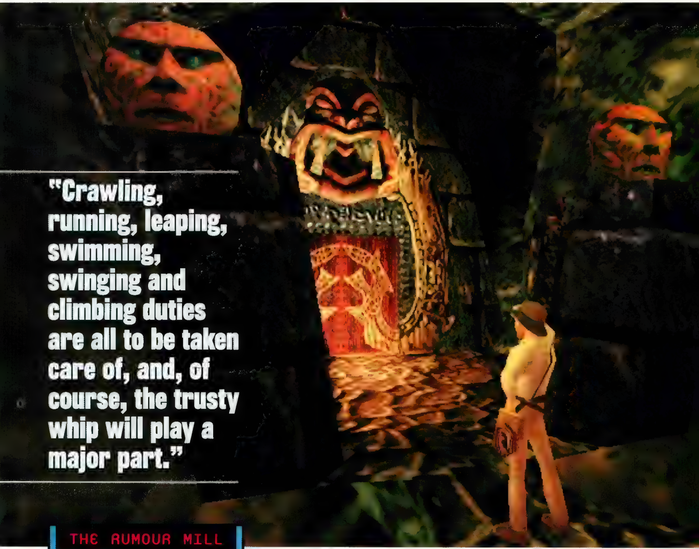
Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine, then, is going to take back what was stolen. The intrepid obtainer of rare antiquities has shown previously excellent form in the videogame arena (*The Fate Of Atlantis*, most notably), but the notion of a bells and whistles 3D action/adventure featuring the original action hero is almost too much to bear. And while there are certain similarities with Core's blockbuster games (*Infernal Machine* takes a third-person view of some very exotic locales), don't expect LucasArts to proffer us a *Tomb Raider* that just happens to star a virtual Harrison Ford. For example, "*The Infernal Machine* is definitely going to carry on the LucasArts credo of a strong, epic story - this'll really draw you in, plot-wise. A lot of games out there simply don't do that," says Steve Dauterman, LucasArts Director of Development. And, as you might expect, Indy's latest jaunt takes place in the 1940s. Just after WWII. 1947, to be precise.

However, rather than the pesky Nazis (who dogged our hero so persistently in the films), it's the Russians who'll be doing their best to thwart and wile. The Cold War is just beginning, and the Soviet government is searching for the ancient Tower of Babel, which is rumoured to contain an inter-dimensional gate (the titular 'Infernal' contraption). Enter the one man who can save the world. Again.

The gate, when activated, will open a doorway to, erm... somewhere, the consequences of which are too ghastly to imagine. Seeing as the inclusion of the Tower of Babel seems to carry on the biblical theme of the first and third films, can we expect more righteous religious vengeance? "Well, let's just say that the consequences of opening the gate are unholy and inhuman," teases Steve Dauterman. Intriguing. *Infernal*, by its very nature, is suggestive of a very hot place...

The whip in action. We can assume that it'll have a variety of uses, of which scorpion teasing is but one.

"A variety of potentially stunning action sequences have already been confirmed, including a white-water rapids raft ride, an off-road jeep chase and Temple Of Doom's rollercoaster mine cart chase."



> "Crawling, running, leaping, swimming, swinging and climbing duties are all to be taken care of, and, of course, the trusty whip will play a major part."

THE RUMOUR MILL

It may have come to your attention that a new Indiana Jones film is in the offing, with the increasingly craggy Harrison Ford slated to return as the titular hero.

While this, in itself, is unashamedly exciting news, details of the plot and title are vague. There are two main rumours flying around the Internet at the moment: 1) that the film will be called Indiana Jones And The Lost Continent, and will feature the *discovery* of Atlantis (sound familiar?); and 2) it'll be called Indiana Jones And The Ultimate Destiny. It's 1953 and Indy's retired, caring for his ailing father. The plot revolves around the search for Shangri-La, taking our hero to Scotland, among other places, and it contrives to take in Jerusalem, Christianity and the Crucifixion.

Intrigued? So are we. However, one more gossamer-thin tissue of chinese whispers has wound its way to us. Maybe, just maybe, the new film will be based on 'Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine'. We'll eat our hats if it is....

"They're digging in the wrong place!"

Extradimensional villains, of course, will be the least of Dr Jones' worries. With scores of Eastern Bloc goons intent on dishing out their own particular brand of Commie re-education, Indy will have little time for demonology.

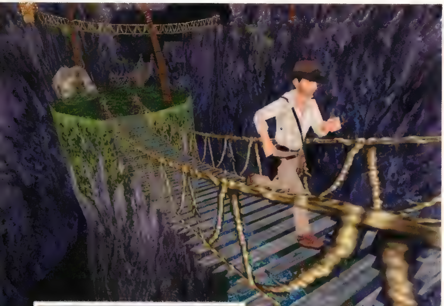
Naturally, Indy is equipped with a veritable cornucopia of moves with which to bamboozle the Soviets. Crawling, running, leaping, swimming, swinging and climbing duties are all to be taken care of and, of course, the trusty whip will play a major role. Other weapons, though, will be available to use, including pistols, rifles, bazookas, grenades and satchel charges, among others – all in keeping with the time period, naturally.

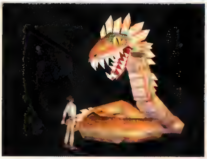
However, the emphasis in *The Infernal Machine* will be as much on using the ol' grey matter as it is on peppering the enemy with lead. Huge mechanical puzzles will feature heavily throughout with vital pieces of the dimension gate (dubbed the Aetherium) scattered around the world, hidden in increasingly tricky – not to mention dangerous – places.

Hence the globe-trotting shenanigans and disparate locations. The ruins of Babylon, the mountains of Kazakstan and the Aztec pyramids are some of the more varied environments to be hazarded, and there'll also be plenty of interior locations – temples, tombs, dungeons – all of which are reportedly huge. "Oh yes. We're really pushing the envelope here," continues Dauterman. "The environments are really something special. As is the rest of the game!", he adds, not unreasonably.

"Indy – why is the floor moving?"

Excitingly, each part of the Aetherium that Indy recovers bestows a magical power. What these actually are has yet to be disclosed, but they'll be necessary to complete subsequent sections of the game, as well as foiling the Russians' overall intent. It all sounds in keeping with the epic, "Boys' Own" feel of the feature films, but what of the other aspects that made the movies so popular? We want seat-of-your-pants set pieces, unparalleled action and great escapes. Please? "Oh yeah!" laughs Dauterman. "Don't worry about that!" A variety of potentially stunning action sequences have already been confirmed, including a white-water rapids raft





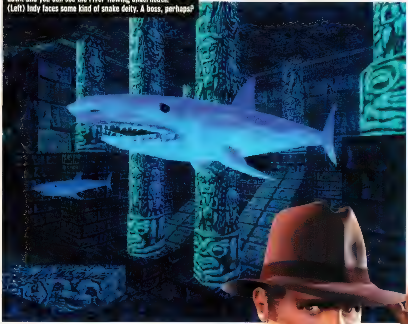
(Above) Running across a rope bridge, just like in The Temple Of Doom. The attention to detail is incredible – look down and you can see the river flowing underneath.
(Left) Indy faces some kind of snake deity. A boss, perhaps?

ride, an off-road jeep chase and the best part of The Temple Of Doom movie – the rollercoaster mine cart chase. Cracking stuff, and no mistake.

So then, everything appears to be in place. The action, the adventure, the atmosphere, the apocalyptic premise... but how does it look? Can LucasArts really pull off this ambitious project successfully? The cynics might say that, this time, they've overreached themselves.

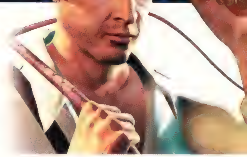
Nonsense, we cry. Cast your eyes over these pages – look at these screenshots. Marvel at them. Wallow in their opulence. In fact, so impressed are we here at GAMER Towers, that we'll stick our necks out and say that you'd be a fool to think that *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine* is going to be anything other than Very Special Indeed. The graphics are nothing short of outstanding – crisp, clear, colourful and there's absolutely no fogging or vision cut-off. You can see, quite literally, for miles. The usual spindly characters that so often blight PC games also appear to have been eliminated in favour of chunkier, more solid figures.

There is, however, a price to pay: a 3D card as there'll be no software-only *Indy*. This shouldn't come as a surprise, in this day and age – just look at *Unreal*. We're sure that there are legions of people out there who are denied the wonderment of this game purely because of its system requirements. But look at what it's achieved... a fully realised game world in every sense of the phrase, a multitude of stunning set-pieces and literally unbelievable graphics. *The Infernal Machine* is set to follow suite in spectacular fashion.



"Bad dates"

We'll apparently be seeing *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine* towards the end of the year. Should this be so, it's bound to surface at the same time as *Tomb Raider III*. However, LucasArts' latest still has a few more tricks up its sleeve to foil the opposition. A co-operative multi-player game (as well as various other, as yet unconfirmed, LAN and Internet modes), smooth controls, and an excellent swooping game camera are all rich icing on an already heavenly cake. And rest assured, we'll be the first to take a slice and report on this potentially divine taste explosion. The clock is ticking.



PAST PERFORMANCE

The Infernal Machine isn't Dr Jones' first foray into the world of PC gaming. Or indeed, the world of PC GAMER, hahaha. Ahem.

There are two previous attempts at virtual derring-do available for our grey boxes o' joy, both differing wildly in terms of quality. First up is *The Fate Of Atlantis*, an ancient pointy-clicky adventure that still remains fantastically good fun, even to this day. Indeed, 'cuddly' Matt Pierce, our esteemed Reviews Editor, rates it as the finest adventure game ever. Multiple branching story-lines, the chance to play as different characters and a intense atmosphere confirms its excellence. And rumour has it the gorgeous, pouting Sophia is going to make a cameo in *The Infernal Machine*...

The other game, *Indiana Jones And His Desktop Adventures* (!?), was a risible precursor to Yoda Stories, a game meant to be played when the boss pops out of the office for ten minutes. Atrociously primitive, top-down monster bashing was its calling card, and, as such, it's rubbish.

Like a cinema's intermission, PC GAMER presents a detour round the videogaming world.

DIVERSIONS

SPY

Showing themselves up

A hotbed of police activity, sexual profligacy, and a few games. It's called E3.

That last great bastion of defence against terrorists, drug smugglers and rabid Bull Mastifs (Atlanta Customs, natch) had its work cut out last month.

When thousands of industry journalists descended on the Georgia city for the E3 show, one miserable official saw fit to charge our very own Mr Chafe the princely sum of $100 simply to pass through customs.

Too honest for his own good, Chafe forgot to deny being a journalist when the question was cleverly mixed into a list of other outlawed professions including international terrorist, drug dealer, megalomaniac dictator and estate agent. The only saving grace, according to Chafe, was seeing TV's GamesMaster ex-regular Dave 'Games Animal' Perry turn as white as his hair while being led into a secluded back-room by three beefy cops. Surely being a professional 'Games Animal' affords some kind of diplomatic immunity?

That other Dave Perry – Shiny Entertainment's perma-tanned boss – also appeared to be slightly less grinsome than usual during the show. The reason? Perhaps due to the fact he had to share the Interplay stand with six ex-Shiny members – the newly formed Planet Moon who were drawing huge crowds to see their stunning debut, *Giants*.

> **"In-house fighting seemed to be the trend of the show."**

In fact, in-house fighting seemed to be the trend of the show, with even the normally reserved teams at 3D Realms (those responsible for *Duke Nukem Forever* and *Prey*), exhibiting marked competition about *each other's* games. Where will it all end?

Inevitably in Fado's Irish Bar. For, sad excuses for international adventurers that they were, the entire UK games industry refused to explore the USA's Deep Southern underbelly during the post-show evenings – instead preferring to seek out the 'familiarity' of the self-styled Irish bar every night.

Doubtless, the City's economy was boosted dramatically by the wads of cash spent on cabs and chilli cheese dogs – although the preferred haunts for big spenders in search of a 'good time' were called Cheetah's, and the Gold Club.

One man in particular was spotted dragging his gaggle of teenage magazine 'journalists' through the doors on a regular basis – whereupon he would shower the fawning youths with enough cash to secure the attention of semi-clad females. Cynical show-goers claimed that the excitable group mistook this unusual show of female interest for real, physical attraction. Although The Spy finds this possibility far too absurd to entertain.

Equally unbelievable was the allegation that one poor magazine man woke every morning to find the naked form of his colleague and room mate asleep on the bed next to him. The gently snoring professional was always found with one hand clutching the remote control, the other cradling his manhood – and all while the TV was showing a selection of adult erotica.

Ignoring such idle gossip though, The Spy made games his first priority at the show. By far the best-kept secret of E3 was *Wargasm* – the new combat simulation from *F-22: ADF* makers, DID.

Managing Director Martin Kenwright demoed Wargasm to The Spy, who was uncharacteristically amazed by what he saw; featuring an incredible 3D engine, the player can jump in and out of any vehicle or ground troop – as well as directing the war via a C&C-style overhead-view. Awe-inspiring stuff, and The Spy is, at this very moment, gathering screenshots for an exclusive look next month.

BROTHELS!
78 Ultima On-line
Germille Pagleer straps on her feminine pants.

BEER!
79 Letter from Aus
Discover what the folk down under think.

OUCH!
80 MechWarrior
Looking back, it wasn't really all that great was it?

PEERING!
80 Out of my window
Wee Scot Donald discusses the meaning of glass.

HOT!
81 Tiberian Sun
Westwood take us through their recent progress.

GAMES MASTERS

Glen Corpes: Bullfrog

We probe the men behind the 'scene'

We toss some googlies at Glen Corpes, one of Bullfrog's finest, the technical mastermind behind most of their 3D engines and project leader on their latest game, Indestructibles.

Was the original *Populous* a stroke of genius or more of a happy accident?
I was playing around with isometric graphics and knocked up the Populous *landscape as a test. I then made the raising and lowering work on the mouse so I could tweak the landscape. Peter loved it and came up with the game in a few weeks, the details were filled in by all of us. I think the gameplay was a mix of Peter's genius and an accident that popped out of the 'limitations' of my landscape system.*

And what of *Populous III* – can it possibly be worth the wait?
Populous III *is now a prequel, it's a game about the progression from mortal to god, so it's a unique strategy game in its own right. Letting it evolve in this direction has taken a lot longer than an update of* Populous *would have done, hence the delay. It will be well worth the wait.*

What would you say has been the highpoint of the PC's gaming history?
Multi-player Quake*. Not* Quake II*, not* Unreal*, good old* Quake*.*

And the lowpoint?
Pre-3Dfx 3D accelerators.

Microsoft – saviours of the PC or spawn of Satan?
Undoubtedly the saviours of the PC in every way. Whether the PC deserved saving is another issue. I'd rather live in a parallel universe where the PC 'standard' never got established.

How would you sum up life at Bullfrog post Molyneux?
We've definitely lost one of the best game designers in the world but the impact isn't as bad as people expect. The development culture he inspired is still largely intact. We have also lost a world class PR man, which is something of a bigger problem...

And before?
To be honest, by the end of his time here he was hardly in the building. He was spending more time on EA business, because he was a very major EA shareholder.

Finally, describe yourself in terms of three video game characters.
The spinning top thing in Spindizzy*, the bouncy lines in* Qix *and the backward L-shaped piece in* Tetris*.*

Six degrees of irrelevance

This month – Professor Fred Theroux Mingus joins *Resident Evil* to *Duke Nukem* in six easy steps!

"*Resident Evil*, an everyday tale of misunderstood zombies, was based on the classic films of esteemed director George Romero. George Romero shares the surname of the famous John, he of *Quake* fame. *Quake* features hard bitten marines battling against the odds, much like those courageous men that fought in Vietnam. Dr. Alan 'The Bear' Westmoreland was one such man, star of the game *'Nam*, which, of course, uses the Build engine. And, naturally, *Duke Nukem* 3D also uses the Build engine. There, I think that should do it. I therefore win and claim my prize."

"There, er, isn't one."

"Oh. I see. Nuts."

CRAP SHOOT

Rear view rubbish

Office-littering tat – for you!

Peruse, if you will, the following sentence, replacing "various exquisite items" and "vast imagination" with "totally irrelevant tosh" and "brain dead meanderings":

"Throughout every month, we are the lucky recipients of various exquisite items, the usefulness and design of which are the fruits of many PR persons vast imagination."

You'll now have a feel for the idiot-child reasoned rubbish that's sent to sweeten our sensibilities when the arrival of a big new game is imminent. For instance, prior to the shoeing we gave *Army Men* we were sent – yes – a bag of plastic soldiers, replete with jet fighters and tanks. An act of generosity only outdone by a bag of 50 *Xenocracy* lighters which accompanied said game's arrival.

Anyway, every month from now we'll be sending one lucky reader the choicest cack we've got. This month, you can win a Data Design mirror – specifically created to hang on the side of your monitor to watch whatever debauched activity may be occurring behind you. All we want you to do is think of one inventive use for this 'indispensable' piece of kit – but remember, anyone can be rude, so do try not to be.

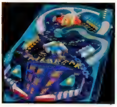
Send your imaginative entries to: Crap Shoot, PC GAMER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

It looked so promising...

21st Century Entertainment

The software scoundrels that flattered to deceive.

It's customary to begin with: "It all started so well." But the truth is, 21st Century was born as another publisher died. Boss Andrew Hewson had already failed with Hewson Consultants, despite having '80s programming heroes Graftgold on board.



But hey, 21st Century was a different kind of operation altogether. One with pinball games. Lots and lots of pinball games. By early 1996 it was clear the publisher really wasn't comfortable with anything else, even long-delayed graphic adventure *Synergist* found its way to the scrap heap. Which might not have been a problem except that the publisher's attempts to bring the sights, sounds, and hi-jinks of real pintable action to the PC screen were never going to make Mummy proud. It doesn't take an accountant to realise that a company can't survive on one kind of game when it's not the leader in that field. Especially when that field isn't the most fertile on the farm anyway. So few batted an eyelid when 21st Century recently folded, so close to that new millennium and yet so far.

Still, there's got to be a position out there for whoever came up with all those inspired game names: *Slam Tilt Pinball, Absolute Pinball, Pinball Dreams, Pinball Illusions, Pinball Fantasies, Pinball Fantasies Deluxe, Total Pinball 3D*... a gem each and every one.

IT HAPPENED...

10 years from now

The last ever issue of PC GAMER hits the streets today. Closure of the world's last computer games magazine, after 189 issues, has been blamed on falling sales, and staff unable to tear themselves away from their network long enough to write anything.

Circulation has plummeted since the invention of the 'Pleasure-Prompt' Teledildonic Stimsuit, an advanced virtual reality device, which has made it impossible to distinguish games from real life. Since consumers' mass adoption of the 'wetware' format, every game reviewed in PC GAMER has received an incontestable 100%. As a tearful spokesman for PC Gamer admitted yesterday,

"Every game's brilliant these days, there doesn't seem much point in going on, and anyway, we've only ever liked *Quake*." Experts blame much of the magazine's decline on the recent single-player-game revival, headed by Funsoft's 'A Night In With Marilyn Monroe' which has gripped gamers so intensely that few are interested in going to the shops anymore.

All Formats Top Five (10th July 2008)

1. A Night In With Marilyn Monroe
2. Supreme Despot 'Gold'
3. Sim Life
4. Captain Homemaker
5. Leisure Suit Lara XLVIII

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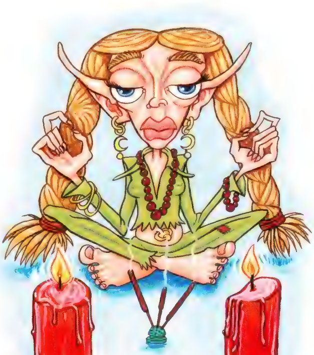
ULTIMA ON-LINE DIARY

Sometimes it's hard...

The Very Public Diary of Germille Pagleer

Fergal Distendo Weakbladder lies comatose on the floor of his wife's inn under a mound of fleshy serving wench. Outside the sound of an angry demonstration can be heard, it's Germille Pagleer shouting a warcry in the battle of the sexes.



Monday

5.00 Awoke at the usual hour and went for my swim – 30 bracing minutes in a near-frozen Jhelom lake. Keeps mind and body together in the face of the incessant testosterone-charged clamour of modern life. You won't catch me getting drunk and then leering at the oppressed serving girls – actually, that's not entirely true, but I never touch hard liquor. Actually, that's not entirely true either, depending on how quickly you say it. Enough!

5.35 Muesli and bark for breakfast and then an hour's meditation in front of of The Womb. I was interrupted by some lecherous fools who thought it would be a good idea to climb a nearby flagpole in a vain attempt to peer at my naked modesty. One fell and broke what I assume to be his neck, while the other remains snagged atop the pole, the fine point of which seems to be going in his mouth and out of the back of his head. Such a sight would sicken most of the town's weak-stomached women, but God Herself couldn't have devised a more poetical end for two such licentious of skin. Must remember to replenish my supply of scented candles and joss-sticks.

> **"Chained like animals and abused daily by guards who think of new places to hide red-hot pokers."**

6.45 Leave for work.

6.46 Remember I don't have a job and walk briskly to Sister Viagra's house to plan the day's demonstrations. There have been disturbing reports that a teacher at a nearby primary school has been reading Little Red Riding Hood to the children. Not only is this foul literature bereft of positive female role models, it reinforces the male fantasy that women are weak and men are their strongers and betters and saviours. All that this fetid gender stereotyping achieves is to pander to the male's nascent insecurity, providing an artificial egocentric hero role with which they can identify, when in the harsh reality of the cold light of day men have not only been rendered redundant by mould-breaking advances in artificial insemination and invitrofertilisation, but also by the fact that most of the women in Britannia are actually as strong as the men.

6.51 Return home. Sister Viagra did not answer her door, though I could have sworn I heard noises from within. I can only assume they were as a result of the new meditation of which she spoke. I do not think it wise for the rabbit skinner to leave his cart unattended in the street, even at such an early hour and in such a quiet neighbourhood as Sister Viagra's.

6.52 Write letter of support to the Jailed Sisters of Jhelom. These fearless femmes struck a famous blow for The Cause by stripping naked in the market square and trying themselves to the railings of the Court House – soon they'll have to rename the town Suffragette City. I must remember to find out why they are being kept at the Distendo's brothel and not the prison. Perhaps it is overcrowded with all the political prisoners they keep chained like animals, abused daily by guards who alleviate the drudgery of their daily lives by thinking of new and interesting places to hide red-hot pokers.

7.59 Finish letter. Must learn how to write quicker. It's a nightmare when we have to produce hundreds of pamphlets to distribute on market day and to put on people's carts. If only Friar Caxton could lend us a few of his scribes the revolution would only be a day a way, not years.

8.00 Time for evening meditation in front of The Womb. As the old day dies, the new day shall be born within its warming walls and The Motherhood will live on to fight another day. Realise I forgot to by joss-sticks – will have to make do with the delicate scent of dung candles.

NEXT MONTH

The goblin rent boy shows us a few of his famous flat-headed tricks.

TRASH TALKING

Bulls**t!

Dear Sir,
With respect to your review of *Wreckin' Crew*, we'd like to amend certain statements made in our press-release.

"*Wreckin' Crew's* bright arcade graphics should not be taken as an indication of gaming simplicity – gameplay is truly progressive" will now read "We like pretty colours, but once we'd coloured everything in we didn't have a clue what to do next."

Additionally, "At no point in the making of *Wreckin' Crew* has any element been included until unless it would enhance the game " will be amended to "At no point in the development of *Wreckin' Crew* has any element been hindered by the notion of quality. This is the kind of 'unique' product that is created through a careful blend of half-baked ideas and studied foolishness." Thank you for your perspicacity – Telstar

BANDWAGON

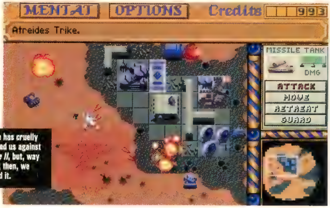
Games that have inspired a genre

Part 1: Dune II

What about it?
Well, we have Westwood Studios' *Dune II: The Building Of A Dynasty* to thank for singlehandedly popularising – and maybe even creating – the real time strategy (RTS) genre. A genre which has spawned such giants as *Command & Conquer, Warcraft II, Dark Reign*, and *Total Annihilation*.

So sort of like a traditional wargame, where you move units around a battlefield, except it all happens in real time instead of being turn-based.
Exactly. And before you ask, Cryo's *Dune* was nothing like that – it was more of a graphic adventurey thing. Though very different, both games were based on the *Dune* novels by Frank Herbert, and involved the conflict between the Houses of Atreides and Harkonnen.

It's not exactly rocket science, is it? I mean the leap from turn-based to real time. Seems a bit obvious really.
Yep, but in 1993 *Dune II* was the first game to successfully incorporate it and remain playable. It pretty much defined the RTS template which is still around today: top-down view; plenty of distinctive units, both land and air-based, each with their pros and cons (and which acknowledged your orders as you moved them); terrain which affected movement; construction of various buildings to get better units; resource management; and so on.



Time has cruelly turned us against *Dune II*, but, way back then, we loved it.

Wait! I've heard there's some console game that did it first.
It's debatable, but let's face it, *Dune II* was the one that everyone played. Until *Command & Conquer* came along, of course...

In about eight trillion different versions...
Yup. A refined version of *Dune II* with a more conventional military emphasis, the various *C&C* games and mission disks have sold more than five million units across all platforms. Which is a lot. We've had *C&C, Covert Operations, Red Alert, Counterstrike, The Aftermath*, and now *Sole Survivor*. Not to mention the umpteen clones which have come and gone.

Enough, perhaps?
Well, Westwood don't think so. They're about to release an updated version of *Dune II* called *Dune 2000* at any moment.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Australia

What do our Australian cousins do with their PCs?

```
You go east.
You are in the trolls clearing
 YOU CANNOT GO EAST.
> OPEN DOOR
> E
> E
```

Where we dip an inquisitive toe into international waters to discover what's 'hot' on PCs 'over there'. This month the realisation that language barriers may prove the undoing of this column...

Australia is a land of deep roots. As with beer, sport and (often tragic) music, our gaming heritage is no exception.

In 1982 Melbourne House released *The Hobbit* for the Sinclair ZX-81. It sold over 500,000 copies and became the Number 1 game in Europe. Two years later, Melbourne released *Way Of The Exploding Fist* for the C64. This gem of a game holds two records: it was the world's first beat-'em-up and is still, after all this time, the World's Stupidest Game Name. We still love it dearly though.

Melbourne House (otherwise known as Beam Software) were our only flag-bearers for many years. Now we've picked up some speed. The Canberra Institute of Technology runs a course on game design. Most graduates head off to Adelaide to work for one of the many new gameco's there, this a result of that state's generous tax incentives for multimedia development. Adelaide is also where you'll find Emergent Software, whose *Power Slide* (published by GT) was the best driving game of 1998's E3. Up on the Gold Coast is Auran, the *Dark Reign* people, while in the unlikely town of Woy Woy, Eyst are putting the finishing touches on *War Torn*, an advanced 3D *C&C*. There are, in fact, dozens of Australian developers. Some you'll hear about in time, others may disappear under the anonymity umbrella of big-league publishers. As always, though, you can count on we Aussies plugging away relentlessly.

We love our games and our technology. Australian's have, per capita, just about the highest usage and ownership of PCs in the world. We dig the Net too.

Planning a holiday? Come down under then, for these days there's plenty of parking space at Bondi beach, as the locals are all at home and inside worshipping consumer electronics...

Ben Mansill Editor, PC PowerPlay

IMPORTED
FOSTER'S LAGER
FOSTER'S
F
FOSTER'S
AUSTRALIAN FAMOUS BEER
BIERE-CERVEZA-BIRRA

AUSSIE FACTS:

New PC game: $89.95 – £30
Multimedia PII300, 32Mb RAM, 6.5Gb HDD: $2200 – $2500 – £800 – £900
Big Mac: $2.65 – £1
Music CD: $28 – £10
Slab of 24 cans of Fosters (which nobody here actually drinks – disgusting stuff): $30 – £11
Copy of PC GAMER UK: $15 – $20 – £5.50 – £7.50 (cheap at twice the price)
National Embarrassments: Peter Andre, Dani Minogue, Pauline Hanson, Neighbours, Home and Away, Noeline Donagher (Sylvannia Waters), Fosters beer, Peter Andre.
National Treasures: The Waugh brothers, Warnie, Kylie, AC/DC, Midnight Oil, Clive James, Harry Kewell, Mark Bosnich, Paul Sironen, New Zealand, Mel Gibson.
Oh, and it's a really nice place to live.

POND LIFE

Across the pond

Just as US life was returning to normal after E3, Id Software threw a spanner in the works.

Not the exhibition hall at E3, but a gratuitous picture of *Quake II*.

Last month, the entire US games industry descended upon the sleepy city of Atlanta.

The very existence of Atlanta isn't something most of the US software industry gives a hoot about – the majority of publishers are based on completely the opposite side of the country and resent the long, expensive trip. When they arrive the union laws over here mean that someone has to set up stands for you at vast expense – renting equipment and space for a stand starts at $1 million and can reach $10 million without too much trouble. And then there are the flights, hotels, taxis, parties, restaurants...

The European journalists I met were dogged by hot and humid thunderstorms and many were further depressed by the increasing dominance of US publishers and developers at the show. In every important field – including real-time strategy and especially 3D – the huge US base of college-fed talent and Internet-connected designers is proving increasingly unstoppable.

US perception of E3 was unusually reserved. Bar the single-minded netzines devoting reams of coverage to Game X, Y or Z there was a pervading sense of lack of innovation. The proliferation of the web and the on-line magazines meant there were not actually that many totally new PC titles on display. One of the main absentees was of course *Quake III*.

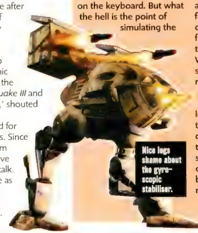
Id Software apparently took the decision not to show the game after having a last minute change of direction but quite where they were going was a mystery. A couple of weeks later an announcement by Id supremo John Carmack sent an electronic Earthquake rumbling through the Internet. '"There will be no *Quake III* and no more single-player *Quake*,' shouted hundreds of sites. The once irreproachable Id Software had for the first time attracted enemies. Since the initial outburst, relative calm has returned although the move is still dominating US gaming talk. Some people have even gone as far as looking at *exactly* what Carmack said, and I shall bring you their thought next month.

THE BITTER TRUTH

MechWarrior

It's time to face the facts.

Anyone can see the appeal of wearing giant metal one-pieces, bristling with high velocity weaponry. In a word – respect. Service at the bar? "Coming right up Mr Assault Bot, Sir." Faulty goods? "That rocket launcher does not affect your statutory rights, your Mechness." But the problem with *MechWarrior* is that it takes itself so seriously. This is a piece of software that tries so hard to be a simulation, finding a use for almost every single button on the keyboard. But what the hell is the point of simulating the movement, weapons and HUD of a giant 31st Century bipedal war droid? You can't 'simulate' it because it doesn't bloody well exist. Even side-stepping this worrying aspect the *MechWarrior* experience has never been up to much anyway. Unless, that is, you find the idea of lumbering over suspiciously barren, flat landscapes a thrill. Still, there's always the combat. Which is great if you're smitten by the idea of two robots going in circles until one either loses its shields or dies of boredom. And let's not forget that masterly touch where too much damage causes your Mech to temporarily shut its systems down, robbing you of the opportunity to fight back. They're taking the metal mickey.



Nice legs shame about the gyro-scopic stabiliser.

OUT MY WINDOW

The exhaustively researched column that knows what's 'going on'. In my face is *Unreal's* Skaarj, the brownest of brutes. I have him trapped on a P200. He's so slow he's practically turn-based – so there's plenty of time to consider my next move. Out my window is TV's Julia Sawalha facing down the brownest of ales. Little does the spunky former Press Gang editor know that she is sitting but feet away from 'Mono'. Named after his brain cell, Mono is the master of the meaningful look. Like the Salsa teacher, functioning in the rooms opposite, whose class is nothing more than an excuse to rub his beef chimichanga into someone. But there's nothing for me out there. A flicker of movement. Aha. Mr Skaarj – not so fast. Now *I* shall teach *you* the meaning of brown.

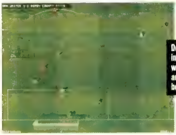
GUEST SPOT

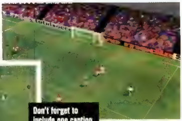
Uncensored!

Your chance to review for PC GAMER.

Can you do a better job of reviewing games than us? Well, you can't, obviously (Ahem...), but we're going to give you the chance. It's time you had your say so every issue we're going to print the most entertaining reader review of the month, uncensored. So carefully craft 250 of your finest words on any game you like and, who knows, we may even give you a job. Send your entries to: Uncensored, PC GAMER, 29 Monmouth St., Bath, BA1 2DL.

And this month – Andrew Pickup from Kent tackles *Total Soccer!*





Don't forget to include one caption with your review and a score would be nice too.

Meet total soccer – while the year is still 1998 and the game is football it happily ignores such trivial things as the world cup, while still arriving just in time to cash in on it.

So, what about that innovation? Is it a good or a bad thing? Much debate ensues about that but I can describe it to you. Imagine a football game that anyone can use in a couple of minutes, and yet takes hours and hours of play to master. A game that everyone can develop a technique. Well this game is it.

The big difference is, the ball it won't 'stick' to your feet when you run into it. Just try 90 degree turns round players, but no, if you are tempted to do so the ball shoots away at a tangent. You scream and paddy, well I did, but this annoying feature allows for incredible passes and inconceivable shots. The amount of after-touch allowed is vastly increased, you control player and ball. Unfortunately the technique is difficult to pick up. I'll just go practice in single player.

I was right it doesn't help, for the AI is infallible, a creature brought up with the deepest secrets of football buried in it's head. Not easy to beat. Not much fun too. The whole things just to difficult, and its not much of looker either and while it's easy to see everything, but it's too old. The control system feels unfinished, the menus are ugly and the player select is a teensy bit dodgy.

Best to ignore this old dog, eh?

DEVELOPER DIARY

Tiberian Sun: Part 2

We squeeze Westwood's Eric Yeo and he leaks *Tiberian Sun* secrets.

It'd be great if Westwood taunted us with a few more in-game shots as well as all the lovely video.

Game design is locked down and it's up to our programmers to make sure everything on the features list gets in. The non-linear mission layout we are working on is progressing nicely. Here is an example. Each mission has a main objective. You can try to complete the main objective, but there are also secondary objectives or missions that can be attempted first. These secondary missions will often give you access to allies and technology that will help you with the main mission. The idea is to let players make strategic choices and decisions that affect the telling of the story.

Most of the units are now functional, for both sides. We're currently in the process of getting the veteran unit system working. This is a point-based system that takes into account which unit killed which unit or structure. For instance, a tank killing an infantryman doesn't gain much, but an infantry unit killing a tank gets a lot of points. As units and troops gather experience they will gain strength, speed, and, in some cases they earn new abilities.

The dreaded Ion Storms are also working. These Tiberium-spawned weather disturbances shut down all high-tech weapons. That means stealth tanks become uncloaked, obelisks shut down, and the GDI's Firestorm Defence comes down. The game actually turns into a grunt war for a limited time, so players can't rely too much on all that nifty new technology.

Finally, The filming for the mission briefings will begin in a few weeks. Our production standards will be the highest of any Westwood game to date, and we expect to have high-quality actors. It's the strongest script we've ever had, and we have to do it justice.

Until next time!

NEXT MONTH

And next time is two months away for us and Eric. Next month we tune back in to Tim Schafer-land for an update on *Grim Fandango*.

Main stream

The mainstream media may be good at a lot of things – reviewing films, printing pictures of half-naked women, that kind of thing – but when it comes to reviewing games, any critical faculties they purport to possess drown in a steaming pile of asinine incompetence. Let us rewind to the start of the year, and look at mighty movie tome Empire.

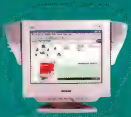
GoldenEye 007? Two stars out of five? What babble from the sick bed is this? This spectacular display of cretinous foot-gnawing demonstrated exactly how easy it is to make a fool of yourself when you don't know anything. Calling it a "testosterone-soaked *Doom* clone" may impress the supermarket-shoppers by demonstrating a modicum of gaming historical knowledge, but, as a calculation of popular mood, it displays all the soundness of judgement of a peewee politician in a baseball cap. *GoldenEye* may not be a PC game, but its brilliance is unquestionable. Quite apart from the fact that you can 'be' Bond, the exquisite objective-based missions, emphasis on stealth and smashing graphics mark it out as a sublime modern classic. And we haven't even mentioned the enemy AI, sniper rifle or Jaws.

Empire, you are fools and we win.

SONY

Sony Trinitron monitors have long been recognised for their outstanding image quality. Now for the multimedia age, Sony has tuned in to your audio requirements too. The new 'AS' monitors have built-in speakers and a sub-woofer, providing hi-fi quality sound. Of course there's shielding inside to ensure all this sound doesn't interfere with your screen image. There's also an integrated microphone and headphone socket, and a USB connector for adding other peripherals. The new design 'AS' models come in 15 and 17" CRT sizes, both at very affordable prices. But don't just listen to us. Visit your local Sony stockist to see (and hear) these models - and other models in the range - for yourself. Isn't it time you took your ears seriously?

The 'AS' Multimedia monitor



Sony monitor and speakers

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Or call Sony for your nearest reseller:

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Introducing the first monitors to take your ears seriously

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On-line gaming is still a minority blood-sport, but that doesn't stop it being the best. Join PC GAMER each month and discover the world of pain and pleasure calling you from afar...

ON-LINE GAMING

Wireplay
The games network from BT

JOIN THE CLUB NETWARE

You reckon you're the best *Bust-A-Move 2* player of your generation, but how can you prove your prowess? Play games on the Internet, of course. By RICHARD LONGHURST

GET YOUR LADDERS HERE

Prove your prowess in these on-line arenas.

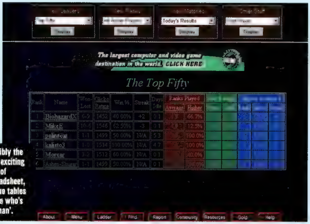
Case's Internet Gaming Ladders
http://www.igl.net/
Ladders for more than 60 games and free to enter.

Links Tour
http://www.linkstour98.com/
The official *Links LS* Tour. Get your multi-player patches here.

The Game Engine
http://www.game-engine.com/ladcat.asp
Not as prestigious or as comprehensive as Case's Ladder, but worth a bash all the same.

.net Wireplay Singles FFA League
http://www.graveyard.u-net.com/ffaleague/
Top fun every Thursday in the *Quake* free-for-all league.

Kali
http://www.kali.net/js/kulture/ladders.html
Ladders aplenty for Net-savvy Kali-connected hipsters. *Red Alert's* the most popular ladder with (ulp) 4,200 members.



The Top Fifty

Rank	Name	Won-Lost	Glicko Rating	Win %	Streak	Days Idle	Ranks Played Average	Ranks Played Higher
1	BiohazardX	6-9	1452	40.00%	+2	0.1	[illegible]	66.7%
2	MikeE	10-6	1546	62.50%	-3	0.1	[illegible]	12.5%
3	[illegible]	1-1	1499	50.00%	N/A	5.3	[illegible]	100.0%
4	kalisto3	1-0	1514	100.00%	N/A	4.7	[illegible]	100.0%
5	Morcar	3-2	1512	60.00%	N/A	0.1	[illegible]	40.0%
6	Ashen-Shugar	1-1	1499	50.00%	N/A	0.1	[illegible]	[illegible]

Possibly the only exciting kind of spreadsheet, league tables prove who's 'da man'.

RIGHTLY or wrongly, the world is obsessed with positions. And not just in the Kama Sutra. Wherever you look, league tables are springing out of the woodwork – for football, obviously, but also for schools, universities, killer drugs and even dying. Top, middle or bottom, whether you're a hospital, football club or infant school teacher, you've got to be concerned about your position.

It's only natural – all things, as Mr Einstein so rightly pointed out, are relative. What's the point of a teacher, a university, a hospital or even you being brilliant if you've got nothing to compare the performance with?

Thinking back to school, my great pleasure in getting 85 per cent in my first-year French exam wasn't due to the naked brilliance of the raw result, but the fact that I had come third in the class and had beaten Iain MacDonald into fourth place. How he blubbed (I imagined) when he ran home to Ma and explained that the Dirty Kid had out-done him en Français.

Since then, I have not been so successful. But that's another story.

Go down any arcade and you'll see kids pumping quids into machines to get their spawny initials electronically engraved on those high score tables. So what if they'll be erased when the bloke with the mop and the limp switches the machine off at night, for all of a day Johnny Nomates can rule the roost, even if it is only on a five-year-old *Raiden* coin-op.

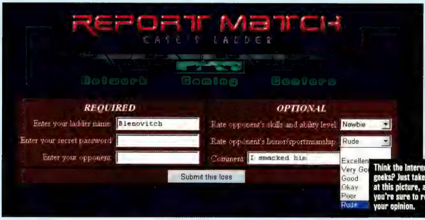
In fact, one of the things missing from PC games is the lack of better-than-thou pseudo-religious rivalry. In the old days, the ancestors of PC GAMER used to print high score tables, encouraging readers to send in photographs of fuzzy TV screens showing their achievements on the latest Amiga shoot-'em-up or platformer. The thrill of seeing your name up in lights (or down on paper) far outweighed any poxy magazine prize – usually a T-shirt that got lost in the post – and pandered to every solitary gamer's need to be recognised by his (or, very occasionally, her) peers.

Those heady days of arcade adulation and magazine high score tables are making a comeback thanks to the Internet and multi-player games, which provide limitless scope for competitive play, generating endless stats that prove without a shadow of a doubt, that you – yes YOU – are simply the best.

THE PRICE OF FAME

On the Net it's not the taking part or even the winning that counts, it's having your name sitting at the top of the high score table, and the Internet Service Providers don't half know it. The more you play on-line, the more money's being made by phone companies, ISPs and gaming services, so now there are leagues, tournaments, tables and knock-outs for pretty much every game that it's possible to play on-line. *Quake*, *Starcraft*, *Links LS 98*, *Command & Conquer*, chess, bridge – you name it, there's an on-line competition for it.

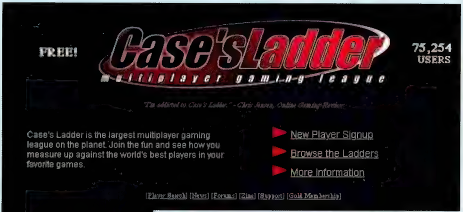
The insanely competitive nature introduced by the mere presence of a high score table is no more self evident than in a *Quake* free-for-all, whether on



REQUIRED
Enter your ladder name: Blenovitch
Enter your secret password:
Enter your opponent:

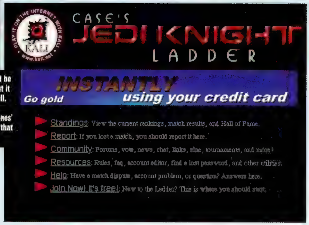
OPTIONAL
Rate opponent's skills and ability level: Newbie
Rate opponent's honor/sportsmanship: Rude
Comment: I smacked him

Think the Internet's for geeks? Just take a look at this picture, and you're sure to revise your opinion.


FREE!
Case's Ladder
multiplayer gaming league
75,254 USERS

Case's Ladder is the largest multiplayer gaming league on the planet. Join the fun and see how you measure up against the world's best players in your favorite games.

New Player Signup
Browse the Ladders
More Information
[Player Search] [News] [Forums] [Zine] [Support] [Gold Membership]


PLAY IT ON THE INTERNET WITH KALI
KALI
www.kali.net
CASE'S JEDI KNIGHT LADDER
Go gold INSTANTLY using your credit card

Standings: View the current rankings, match results, and Hall of Fame.
Report: If you lost a match, you should report it here.
Community: Forums, vote, news, chat, links, zine, tournaments, and more!
Resources: Rules, faq, account editor, find a lost password, and other utilities.
Help: Have a match dispute, account problem, or question? Answers here.
Join Now! It's free!: New to the Ladder? This is where you should start.

It may not be pretty, but it works well. Just like Nathan Jones' mum, for that matter.

Wireplay or anywhere else. The best players frantically jab the Tab key as they gib, desperate to see that their name is creeping ever-nearer the top of the level's score table. And then it starts all over again, on Wireplay a never-ending cycle of 12-minute dashes to the top.

A more ephemeral symbol of status you couldn't wish for. If you really want to be remembered as the *Quake* king-pin, though, you need to enter one of the many, many, many on-line leagues. Wireplay users are well catered for with countless clan leagues and the .net FFA Singles League for free-for-all gibbage. Six divisions of eight players slug it out every Thursday with the promise of promotion and the threat of relegation foremost in their minds.

QUAKE AND LADDERS

If you don't want to fork out 2.5p a minute (cheap rate) to Wireplay but still want to demonstrate your *Quake* prowess, you can sign up with the *Quake* ladder on Case's Internet Gaming ladders *(http://www.igl.net/)*. Essentially, Case's ladders are the on-line equivalent of the old amateur squash and tennis club match-making stand-by. Played on a variety of Net-based gaming services (Internet Gaming Zone, Kahn, Kali, Mplayer, TEN and the like), the ladders provide a raison d'être for your fun-filled multi-player matches – and reward your efforts with hearty approbation and the recognition of your global peers.

More than 80 games are supported, from *Age Of Empires* to *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter* through *Doom*, *Jedi Knight*, *Longbow 2* and *Magic: The Gathering*, ensuring that there's a

TAKE OFF!

It's currently 18th June and it's slashing down with rain. If, like us, you're miffed at getting wet through no fault of your own, you have two choices – stay inside, or visit ***http://www.bargainholidays.com***. This is the UK's top Web holiday site and you'll find destination guides, availability, prices and weather for late breaks, weekends away and months off in Bali. It certainly beats waiting for some snaggletoothed travel 'assistant' to pay any attention in the high street, and you'll be able to browse all those possibilities they can't be bothered to look up as well. Just don't blame us if you end up in a warzone.

SITE OF THE MONTH

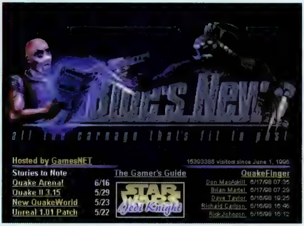
BLUE'S NEWS

Web Site ■ http://www.bluesnews.com

To anyone even remotely interested in 3D shoot-'em-ups – particularly *Quake* and its sequel – Blue's News is *the* site to visit. As the name suggests, the site's the domain of Webmaster Blue (Stephen Heaslip), who somehow manages to almost always be first with news (big and small) relating to games of the genre.

Also featuring copious but simple to follow links, in-depth tips, a meticulous gamer's guide, FAQs, and daily updated .plan files, Blue's News has become the definitive news site for 3D games on the Internet. You'll also find links to *Unreal* and *Jedi Knight*-dedicated sites, as well as information about *Quake* clans and how to join.

The only possible criticism of Blue's News is that, like the majority of American sites, it occasionally suffers from an irony bypass. Even developers' most trivial domestic details are lapped up as 'news'. More than 15 million hits have been notched up in two years, though – a figure that's risen sharply over the past 12 months. And to those of us who visit regularly, it's little surprise.



Hosted by GamesNET
15393385 visitors since June 1, 1996

Stories to Note
Quake Arena! 6/16
Quake II 3.15 5/29
New QuakeWorld 5/23
Unreal 1.01 Patch 5/22

The Gamer's Guide

QuakeFinger
Don MacAskill 6/17/98 07:35
Brian Martel 6/17/98 07:29
Dave Taylor 6/16/98 19:25
Richaid Carlson 6/16/98 16:45
Rick Johnson 6/16/98 16:12

SNUFFLE SNUFFLE

"Send forth the Ferret!" The cry of joy and adulation which resounds around the PC GAMER offices as regularly as the tides lap upon a tropical shoreline. Without doubt, one of the most splendidly useful Internet utilities ever is the charmingly named WebFerret *(http://www.ferretsoft.com)*. You may have heard of it before, but this little chap will automatically search *all* of the commercial search engines for you, analyse the results and offer up the relevant pages for your perusal. Great for locating obscure Kenneth Williams clips or discovering that Ivor The Engine was actually called Locomotive of the Merioneth and Llantisilly Rail Traction Company Limited. By the way, for a copy of the theme tune try: *http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/town/estate/ej24/ivor/ivor.ra*

league to suit every gaming taste. When you join the ladder for a particular game you start at the bottom (isn't it always the way?) and you can then challenge any player you like to a game – player directories and ladder standings make it easy to get in touch with other players. There are currently 450 players in the *Quake* league, so even fetid newbies might be able to beat someone at the bottom.

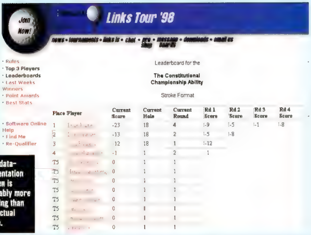
If you beat your carefully chosen opponent, you climb up half the distance between your rank and theirs, shunting everyone down a place (your opponent stays in the same position). This way, good players can very quickly scoot to the top of any particular ladder, humiliating incumbents along the way and no doubt mocking their dubious parentage.

Be careful what you say while you're playing, though, because when winners and losers submit their results to the ladder, they have to rank their opponent for, among other things "honour and sportsmanship". And we all know that the only thing worse than a bad loser is a bad winner. Case's Ladder also has several screens of strict rules which have to be religiously adhered to, not least you're only allowed one account per ladder. There's no point trying to cheat the system – you'll be found out and ostracised by colleagues, friends, family and – most importantly – the ladder itself.

SWINGERS CLUB

Another good place to find on-line adoration for your performances in your favourite game is on its official Web site. Most software publishers have realised that the Internet is, pornography and piracy notwithstanding, a good thing and are embracing it rather than running away from it and hiding. Access Software, producer of *Links LS 98* and, er, *Under A Killing Moon*, is a case in point. Golf's fine as far as it goes, but for years one of the big criticisms of stand-alone *Links* was that it didn't even have a tournament mode, so you were left playing against yourself or your mates in pretty pointless matches.

Now the Net's taken over, Access has seen fit to set up the Links Tour, essentially the on-line equivalent of the PGA Tour, only you can't win several hundred thousand dollars a year playing it. But then neither do you have to practise until your hands are red raw and covered in running sores. More than 4,000 players have registered for Access' Links Tour *(http://www.linkstour98.com/)*, downloading a special patch that sets up the game for on-line tournament play. Weekly results are gathered and collated by Access' all-knowing Web server, feeding them back out so winners can get gratification from their on-line glorification. So what if it's going to be someone else next week – this week I'm the Kapalua Plantation champion and the whole world can see my name up in lights. Or at least they could if they bothered to visit that particular page hidden in the depths of the Links Tour Web site.



Join Now!
Links Tour '98
news • tournaments • links lx • chat • pro shop • message boards • downloads • email us

- Rules
- Top 3 Players
- Leaderboards
- Last Weeks Winners
- Point Awards
- Best Stats
- Software Online Help
- Find Me
- Re-Qualifier

Leaderboard for the

The Constitutional Championship Ability

Stroke Format

Place	Player	Current Score	Current Hole	Current Round	Rd 1 Score	Rd 2 Score	Rd 3 Score	Rd 4 Score
1	[illegible]	-23	18	4	-9	-5	-1	-8
2	[illegible]	-13	18	2	-5	-8		
3	[illegible]	-12	18	1	-12			
4	[illegible]	-1	1	2	1			
T5	[illegible]	0	1	1				
T5	[illegible]	0	1	1				
T5	[illegible]	0	1	1				
T5	[illegible]	0	1	1				
T5	[illegible]	0	1	1				
T5	[illegible]	0	1	1				
T5	[illegible]	0	1	1				
T5	[illegible]	0	1	1				

This data-presentation screen is arguably more exciting than the actual game.

Latrobe Country Club
Hole 10 - Par 3
201 yards
Swing

Golf. Played by overweight, sweaty businessmen who think it counts as exercise. And butch women.

STAR PLAYERS

Some game developers go even further and run their own on-line gaming services. Blizzard's Battle.net *(http://www.battle.net* and *http://www.blizzard.com/)* is the prime example, providing not only an arena where *Starcraft*, *Warcraft* and *Diablo* players can get stuck into each other, but a place where they can find leagues and ladders that show just how good they are.

The first time you log on to Battle.net, you'll be scared, no two ways about it. Everybody else looks like they know what they're doing, there are countless games already running and there are people with weird nicknames that have letters AND numbers. Don't worry – most of them are just as clueless as you.

Are You a Control Freak?
AMD
PROFESSIONAL GAMERS' LEAGUE
About the PGL
Registration
Schedule
Rules
Scoreboard
Game Files
Features
Sponsors
Player Profiles
Message Board
Features
PGL NewsFlash
Visit The AMD PGL Store
Click Here!
Search
Free Newsletter

Get paid for playing games all day. Now there's a thought...

To join a *Starcraft* ladder, for example, you have to have won at least ten Battle.net games – you get half a star for every win, so try to play the people who have as few stars as possible. As long as you've developed some sound off-line tactics, your first tentative steps up your chosen ladder will be easier than you expect and pretty soon you'll be revelling in your new-found position as 1,978th best *Starcraft* player in the world. Fame indeed.

But the trouble with the Net – just as it was with the arcades – is that you only get the recognition of your peers (or in the Net's case the people who happen to be using the same gaming service as you). The kids in your class might have known you were the best *Defender* player in the neighbourhood, but there was no way of knowing how you compared to kids in other arcades.

It's the same deal on-line. You might be second toughest of the infants on Wireplay, but what about all the gamers that don't pay 2.5p a minute for the multi-player privilege and stick to Kali or Barry's World or Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone? Quite simply, you'll never know how good they are unless you prove your prowess on every gaming service (and get a screenshot of each to prove it).

It's still relatively early days for on-line gaming, so the plethora of services, leagues, ladders and tournaments give you all the more opportunity to get your name in on-line lights. The ultimate accolade is to join the Professional Gamer's League *(http://www.pgl.net/)* and start competing for some big prizes, but that can seem far too much like hard work. All the rules and regulations somehow take the enjoyment out of playing games – it's one thing busting a gut to get to the top, but it's quite another to not have any fun trying to get there. And at the end of the day, fun is what it's all about – why else do you think there are so many positions in the Kama Sutra?

WALKTHROUGH

PLAYING STARCRAFT ON BATTLE.NET

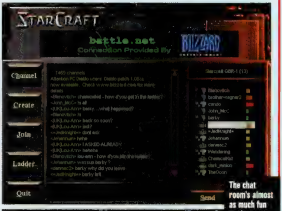
On-line gaming might sound difficult, but *Starcraft* makes it a doddle to set up (but not necessarily win) matches.

① **Log on to your Internet Service Provider in the normal way.**

② **Run *Starcraft* (with the CD in the drive) and hit multi-player. You're logged on to the fastest Battle.net server and prompted to enter a user name (nothing profane, please) and e-mail address to set up a new account.**

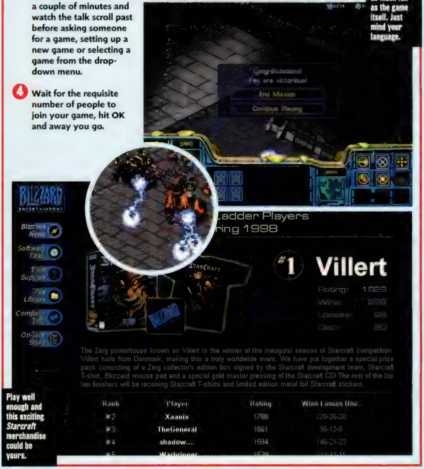
③ **Next, you're dumped in the chat room – double-click on player names to check their ratings. Wait a couple of minutes and watch the talk scroll past before asking someone for a game, setting up a new game or selecting a game from the drop-down menu.**

④ **Wait for the requisite number of people to join your game, hit OK and away you go.**


StarCraft
battle.net
Connection Provided By
Blizzard
Channel
Create
Join
Ladder
Quit
Send
Starcraft GBR-1 (13)
Blenovitch
brother-ragner2
cando
John_McC
berky
=JediKnight=
Jehannum
danmac2
Wandering
ChemicalKid
dark_minion
TheGoon

1469 channels
Attention PC Diablo users: Diablo patch 1.05 is now available. Check www.blizzard.com for more details
<Blenovitch> chemicalkid - how d'you get in the ladder?
<John_McC> hi all
<[UK]Lou-Ann> berky....what happened?
<Blenovitch> hi
<[UK]Lou-Ann> back so soon?
<[UK]Lou-Ann> jedi?
<=JediKnight=> dont ask
<Jehannum> hehe
<[UK]Lou-Ann> I ASKED ALREADY
<[UK]Lou-Ann> hehehe
<Blenovitch> lou-ann - how d'you join the ladder?
<Jehannum> wassup berky ?
<danmac2> berky why did you leave
<=JediKnight=> berky left

The chat room's almost as much fun as the game itself. Just mind your language.


Congratulations!
You are victorious!
End Mission
Continue Playing
MENU
Blizzard Entertainment
Blizzard Net
Software Titles
Tech Support
File Library
Company Info
On-line Store
Ladder Players
Spring 1998
StarCraft
#1
Villert
Rating: 1828
Wins: 228
Losses: 28
Disc: 20

The Zerg powerhouse known as Villert is the winner of the inaugural season of Starcraft competition. Villert hails from Denmark, making this a truly worldwide event. We have put together a special prize pack consisting of a Zerg collector's edition box signed by the Starcraft development team, Starcraft T-shirt, Blizzard mouse pad and a special gold master pressing of the Starcraft CD! The rest of the top ten finishers will be receiving Starcraft T-shirts and limited edition metal foil Starcraft stickers.

Rank	Player	Rating	Wins Losses Disc.
#2	Xaanix	1788	229-26-20
#3	TheGeneral	1661	95-13-8
#4	shadow....	1594	146-21-23
#5	Warbringer	1539	

Play well enough and this exciting *Starcraft* merchandise could be yours.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF QUAKE

And Quake II

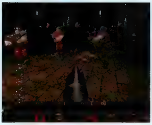
It's not a game, it's a religion! By ALEXANDER STORCH

Goodies are frequently found under the stairs. Unfortunately, everyone else knows that too.

YOU'D be justified in thinking that PC GAMER has explored every single nook and cranny of *Quake* and *Quake II* over the last couple of years. While this is true for the single-player games, the immeasurable delights of multi-player *Quake* cannot be over emphasised. The sheer number of copies sold the length and breadth of our green and pleasant land has guaranteed the game an eternal following, but the gaming reality for most players remains a solitary one. PC GAMER is committed to rectifying this. Over the coming months we'll be delving into the on-line world of *Quake*, showing you how to play, where to play, probing the experts for their secrets, reviewing the best mods and covering a million other areas.

FROM THE TOP

While *Quake's* standard in-game enemies can put up a stubborn challenge (as anyone who has attempted to take on a Tank Commander with a blaster will appreciate), these pixel pugilists are but simple-minded and predictable cannon fodder compared to human opponents. Trev the axe-wielding maniac from Gosport or Fraser the railgun king from Leicester – to name but a couple of dubious *Quake* psychopaths – are relentless and ruthless foes who have devoted a substantial part of the past couple of years memorising levels and honing their skills. And this is what you will need to do (or already be doing) to get the most out of *Quake* and its younger brother.



Unless you've played 'The Bad Place' or 'The Frag Pipe' on-line with a dozen or more trigger-happy human opponents, you simply haven't had the best out of *Quake*.

Getting connected to the 'Net' is mercifully getting easier as time goes by. As soon as you have your modem connected and working properly and have chosen your ISP, you'll be on-line and playing *Quake* within a few hours. When you've made the initial leap and connected you'll be faced with numerous options. The first and possibly biggest decision you'll have to make is whether to go for the original *Quake* masterpiece or the new kid on the block – the better looking, more varied and more strategic *Quake II*. While *Quake II* is undoubtedly THE on-line game of the moment, *Quake* still has a huge and fanatical following. It's the general feeling among the *Quake* dudes 'in the know' that *Quake* on-line still has a good year's worth of life before its loyal followers make the leap to *Quake II*. In fact, the arcade-like charms of *Quake* are such that Id Software casually estimate that as many as 50% of gamers are sticking with the original.

Once you're on-line, the choice of maps and mods (modifications) the *Quake* duo offers is stupendously huge – beginners frequently become totally

QUAKE DOWNLOADS

***Quake* and *Quake II* have spawned a seething mass of add-ons, mods and utilities. Here's where to get them all.**

ESSENTIALS

Gamespy: This is THE most essential program for your on-line Quaking. It is also on CD GAMER.
http://www.gamespy.com/files/GameSpyinstaller153.EXE
ftp://ftp.cdrom.com/pub/idgames2/planetquake/gamespy/GameSpyInstaller153.EXE
http://asp.planetquake.com/dl/dl.asp?gamespy/GameSpyInstaller153.EXE

QuakeWorld: Another 'must have' for Quake.
http://qwcentral.stomped.com/

BOTS

Reaper: *http://idgames.gameaholic.com/cgi-sql/download.sql?file=/quakec/bots/reaper/reaprb81.zip*

Eliminator: *http://idgames.gameaholic.com/cgisql/download.sql?file=/quakec/bots/eliminator/elim141.zip*

Zeus: *http://idgames.gameaholic.com/cgi-sql/download.sql?file=/quakec/bots/zeus2042.zip*

CTF Bot: *http://idgames.gameaholic.com/cgi-sql/download.sql?file=/quakec/bots/newctf12.zip*

MODS

Rocket Arena for Quake:
http://asp.planetquake.com/dl/dl.asp?servers/arena/farena12.zip

Rocket Arena for Quake II:
http://asp.planetquake.com/dl/dl.asp?servers/arena/ra2211.exe

Jailbreak for Quake II:
ftp://ftp.thepeel.com/pub/jailbreak/jb20cl.zip
ftp.totally3d.com

EXTRAS

ID: For the most up-to-date *Quake* patches.
ftp://ftp.stomped.com/pub/idmirror/idstuff/quake2/

Mirc: An excellent Chat program makes finding other Quakers very easy.
http://www.mirc.co.uk

BEGINNERS

GETTING STARTED WITH QUAKE

Five easy steps to making the world a better place.

If you're fortunate enough to already have a modem and an Internet connection, then you're almost ready for the world of on-line pain which awaits. If not, you now have the enjoyable task of buying a new modem and choosing an Internet Service Provider. There is a bewildering choice of modems to be had, but, thankfully, the vast majority will work well and reliably providing you plump for one of at least 33.6bps (and preferably 56k). As for deciding upon an ISP, any of the well-known companies should serve you well. Take advantage of all the 'free trials' to see which one works best for you. We would probably recommend UUNet Pipex (0500 474739) although many others also offer excellent services. Try a month's free access on our cover CD before you decide.

QUAKEWORLD
News&Events
QuakeWorld
OpenGL Quake
Unix Ports

❶ SETTING UP YOUR MODEM

In a perfect world Windows 95 would do all this for you. In reality, you frequently have to install it yourself. Make sure all the plugs are firmly in their correct slots and also that your modem is plugged into the phone socket. Have the CD or floppy disk that came with your modem at hand. Open up 'My Computer' from your desktop and select 'add new hardware'.

Click 'next' but don't let Windows 95 look for your new modem; instead click on 'NO' and pick the modem icon from the list. Again, don't allow Windows 95 to search for your modem as it can locate something completely different. Instead, check the tick box that allows you to pick the modem yourself. Insert your floppy disk or CD, click on 'have disk', insert the correct drive letter and, if you have a choice, select the appropriate modem, then click 'finish'. Installation is now complete. If you have any problems, simply go through the process again.

❷ CONNECTING TO AN ISP

Having decided which ISP to use, you should now find yourself furnished with yet another CD. Pop it in the CD tray and follow the instructions to the letter. Different ISPs use different set-up procedures, so it's impossible to explain them all here. Be prepared to make a call to the ISP's help-line if you encounter problems and have your details ready.

❸ SOFTWARE

To make your Quaking experience considerably more pleasurable, your first port of call should be *http://www.gamespy.com* . Here you can download the most recent version of GameSpy. The first time you use GameSpy you'll need to 'update all sources' which will give you a frighteningly long list of *Quake* servers worldwide. A quick read of the excellent help files will show you how to fine-tune your GameSpy depending on whether you want to play *Quake* or *Quake II*. For *Quake* players another essential download is QuakeWorld – get this from *http://www.idsoftware.com/quakeworld/index.html.* QuakeWorld runs in harmony with GameSpy and provides a host of extra commands for your on-line Quaking, but more importantly it helps to improve the quality of your game.

Quake II users will need a 'patch' to update their original copy of the game to the most recent available, currently 3.16. Go to the 'files section' at *http://clans.quake2.co.uk/*

❹ WHEN CAN I KILL SOMEONE?

Right now! If you've set everything up properly, just connect to your ISP, run GameSpy and join a game of your choice.

❺ MORE GOODIES

Once you've got the basics sorted and are comfortable with using GameSpy and QuakeWorld you'll have access to more servers than you can shake a stick at, running every mod under the sun. See our server list on the right for somewhere to start.

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overwhelmed just by the acronyms, let alone the actual software they stand for. If you are new to multi-player *Quake*, our advice would be to start on the standard DM (deathmatch) maps which came supplied with *Quake* and are included in a patch for *Quake II*. These will provide you with an excellent taster of the good times ahead, some basic multi-player training and oodles of established tactics and talking points after a game. Also, we cannot stress enough the need to intimately know these maps if you intend to stay alive for any length of time.

The DM levels have been beautifully tailored to the demands of deathmatch play – the weapons are expertly positioned so that the best ones aren't always easy to come by and the power-ups are frequently hidden or at the very least require

Super nailgun versus a rocket launcher? It can work, but obviously not this time.

QUAKE SERVERS

There are literally thousands of *Quake* servers worldwide and your connection speed to different servers will fluctuate wildly depending on a number of factors that day. A reasonable 'ping time' (the time between sending a command and receiving some feedback) for a game varies from the low hundreds to three hundred or more. In time you'll have a list of servers that provide you with a decent game, which you can add to your 'favourites' folder in GameSpy. Low pings are A Good Thing and by playing on UK servers you'll help your cause massively.

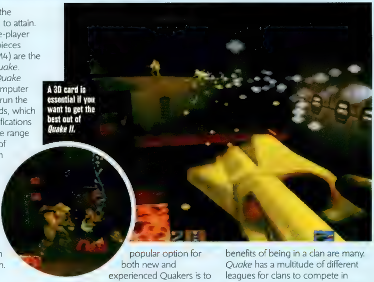
Beneath are a list of top servers in the UK. To use them, run GameSpy, click the 'add server' icon then type in the following IP addresses one at a time for either *Quake* or *Quake II*. You will need to download the particular mod before you can join a server running a game of that type e.g. CTF or RA2. Happy hunting!

QUAKE SERVERS
194.88.93.8:27510
194.88.93.8:27514
194.88.93.8:27712
193.164.183.224:27500
195.153.47.50:27500
195112.4.28:27500
159.134.244.136:27500

QUAKE II SERVERS
194.177.160.244:26500
194.88.93.11:27810
194.88.93.11:27840
194.126.80.155:27910
194.131..8.10:27910
194.176.220.79:27910
194.176.220.79.27000
195.153.47.8:27999

some deft footwork or the legendary 'rocket jump' to attain. They're rubbish as single-player levels but these masterpieces (especially DM2 and DM4) are the meat and two veg of *Quake*.

Many of today's *Quake* servers (the 'master' computer controlling each game) run the game with different mods, which are simply various modifications to the basic game. These range from a different choice of weapons or the addition of some alternative power-ups to quite complex mods which offer a completely different experience, such as Capture the Flag (CTF) or Rocket Arena (RA/2). We'll be covering one of these in more depth each month.



A 3D card is essential if you want to get the best out of *Quake II*.

A NEW LIFE

The effort you put in to improving your on-line Quaking abilities is an immensely rewarding experience. Some Quakers happily devote their entire on-line *Quake* life as lone mercenaries on a crusade of bloodlust and self-satisfaction. This is all fine and dandy, but an increasingly popular option for both new and experienced Quakers is to join a *Quake* clan. Indeed, if you're slightly more technically proficient than most, you could even start one of your own (more on this over the coming months).

Apart from having guaranteed games, being surrounded by people with similar motives and getting to wear your own snazzy outfits, the benefits of being in a clan are many. *Quake* has a multitude of different leagues for clans to compete in including the UKCL (UK Clan League) for Team Play action, the UKDL (UK Duel League) for die-hard 1-on-1 fans and the ever-popular UKCTFL for endlessly enjoyable Capture the Flag fun. *Quake II* is a relative newcomer to the league scene in the UK but even so the UKCCL (UK Clan Carnage League) already has over 70 clans

BOTS

'Bots' are fake human opponents which have been augmenting the standard set of *Quake* enemies for a couple of years now. Their aim is to satisfy everyone's multi-player Quaking desires when they can't get on-line for a game, can't afford to play, or simply if a player feels like some extra practice. There is a massive range of bots designed to test any facet of your game to the limit – from stupid dummy bots on which you can practise your axe swinging, to the full-blown, hard-as-nails cheating bots against which you stand very little chance because of their speed.

The most popular *Quake* bot is still the 'Reaper Bot', designed by the very talented Steve Polge (who has since become one of the men behind *Unreal's* monster AI). This is one of most advanced bots; it has a quick learning curve, is unerringly accurate at the hardest level and it won't cheat. Like most bots, the Reaper's difficulty levels can be tailored to suit your own abilities and you may choose to add more than one (although you'd be mad to try more than four on a small level). On larger maps up to 16 can be included, bot teams can be formed and the AI is so good that they can even play Capture the Flag.

Other bots worthy of mention are the Omicron, Eliminator and Zeus, all freely available on numerous different sites (see 'Quake downloads' on page 88 for exact details). Once you have them, just take a look at the readme file and welcome to the world of 'Bot Bashing'.

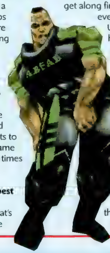
CLAN OF THE MONTH

AbFab

Web Site http://clans.quake2.co.uk/abfab/ ■ **Clan Leaders** Scooby and Vincent Vega

How did you come up with that name?
It's very catchy, and we all love Joanna Lumley.

What makes a successful clan?
Playing regular games as a team; we've played over forty different clans on well over a hundred maps since we were formed. Strong leadership helps too.



How many members do you have?
Sixteen at the moment, and everyone gets to play a clan game at least three times a week.

Who is the best player?
Hmmmm, that's a difficult one because they're all really good. Some excel at deathmatch play, while others prefer Rocket Arena and a few will only play Capture the Flag.

Do you have any 'arch enemies'?
Not really, we seem to get along fine with everyone. Clan UNR would have to be our greatest rival, though.

What's your favourite mod?
It has to be Rocket Arena, it really ROCKS! *(Ahem – Jim)* Three-way Capture the Flag comes a close second. The strategies CTF requires can be very complex, but it's all the more rewarding because of that.

Do you prefer *Quake* or *Quake II*?
We are a *Quake II*-only clan, but most of us used to be heavily into *Quake* and several of our members are still active in *Quake I* clans.

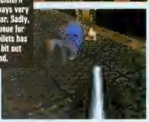
What's your favourite map?
Definitely Q2DM5 'The Pits'; all the Q2DM maps are very popular with the rest of the clan.

Can anyone join the clan?
Usually, yes, as long as they play to a reasonable standard and fit in with the rest of the clan, but at the moment we feel 16 members is enough.

Where do you play?
Barrysworld, Quake2.co.uk and Skirmish HQ are very popular, but there are many other servers that we use from time to time.

What's the point of being in a clan?
The feeling of camaraderie is really excellent; you get to meet loads of like-minded people. But the main thing about it is that competing in a league is stupendous fun.

"The Cistern" is always very popular. Sadly, the queue for the toilets has got a bit out of hand.



competing in straightforward Team Play games on a regular basis, and the SAVAGE league has over 30 clans falling over themselves trying to plunder each other's flags. There will also be new leagues starting soon for '1-on-1' and '2-on-2' competitions and in the next few months we will see the commencement of a US-style Professional Gamers League and also *Quake II* Wireplay leagues.

But the fun doesn't stop there. The ability to change your 'skin' (body and clothes) in both *Quake* and *Quake II* is only restricted by the size of your imagination. If your favourite combat gear is still at the dry cleaners, no problem, download a new one from the multitude of *Quake* sites on-line – the choice is astounding. If there's one thing about *Quake* that never ceases to bring a smile to our faces, it's running around a level trying to hit Elvis Presley on the head with a grenade, or conversely being joined in a lift by Homer Simpson wielding a rocket launcher. A hugely popular activity for *Quake II* players on-line is the added bonus of being able to change 'model'. You needn't be restricted to wandering around as a boring old grunt, oh no, you can be R2-D2, a winged demon, the 'Alien' or, if you really must, a sheep with a mounted machine-gun! *Quake* players on-line are by and large a friendly bunch, which you may find difficult to believe considering that most of the time they're rabidly trying to slaughter you with any weapon they have to hand. Once you've been playing *Quake* for a little while and begin to recognise or befriend other players, the Quaking experience improves even further. With the help of the numerous 'Chat' programs, it's a relatively easy task to assemble a posse to descend on a server for a wholesome blood bath before dinner.

So you see, the *Quake* world really can be your oyster, but instead of a pearl you get an infinitely more useful Quad and a rocket launcher. Until next month, Happy Fragging!

MOD OF THE MONTH

ROCKET ARENA

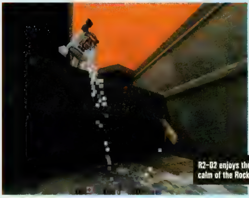
Available at: http://www planetquake.com/servers/arena

Rocket Arena is available for *Quake* and *Quake II*, and prodigious quantities of fun are to be had in both. The biggest difference between Rocket Arena and normal deathmatch is not only that you compete on a whole new set of maps called 'arenas', but you start each contest with a full arsenal. This eliminates the advantage some players get at the start of a level by being the first to get the rocket launcher because everybody automatically has it (along with a full backpack of ammo). A few arenas do exclude some of the most powerful weapons, but your opponents won't have them either so that's immaterial.

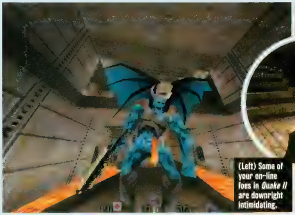
After joining a Rocket Arena server you'll have the choice either to start your own team or join a 'pick up' team. If you're first in the queue, you will then join your selected arena along with your opposing contestant or pick-up team. Then the countdown begins and all hell breaks loose. Most arenas don't allow you to harm yourself, so 'rocket jumping' is immensely popular. Also, there's no rushing around looking for extra armour or health either, because there isn't any! The upshot of this is that, unless there is a huge queue, you never have to wait too long before rejoining the slaughter. If the game has already started when you join or if you've just lost the previous match, you'll be placed in the spectators' area for a particularly advantageous view of the ongoing carnage.

Basically, Rocket Arena is a brutal, non-stop mod that will keep the most experienced player permanently on edge.

92%



R2-D2 enjoys the relative calm of the Rocket Arena.



(Left) Some of your on-line foes in *Quake II* are downright intimidating.

THIS MONTH ON WIREPLAY

For most people in the UK, Wireplay is the easiest way to kill a few virtual strangers. PC GAMER brings you news of the service's latest offerings. By STEVE OWEN

MAKE NEW FRIENDS

Clubs play an important part in Wireplay's social life. Many organise pre-planned events, weekly updates and specific matches, ladders and tournaments. If you're interested in joining a club, take a look at the following Web sites or e-mail the relevant person.

Age Of Empires club – *http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~psando/frames.hm*
Air Attack club – http://www.westernisles.demon.co.uk/AirAttack
Armoured Fist 2 club – *shov@compuserve.com*
Big Red Racing club – *niosol@rocketmail.com*
Descent & Descent 2 club – *http://www.hattweb.force9.co.uk/*
Chess club – *DavidJWalsh@email.msn.com*
Command & Conquer club – *http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tjcarter*
Duke Nukem 3D club – *www.btinternet.com/~tibbar/wp.html*
Draughts club – *colin.reynolds@ cableinet.co.uk*
EF2000 club – *http://www.yeovil-college.ac.uk/EF2000/index.htm*
F-22 ADF club – *http://www.talus.force9.co.uk/f22*
Gettysburg club – *RHe8601703@aol. com*
Incubation club – *never@btinternet. com*
Jedi Knight club – *www.s-clark.demon.co.uk/index.html*
Netmech/MechWarrior club – *http://www.rebo.demon.co.uk*
Red Alert club – *http://www.ellisweb.com/red-alert*
Total Annihilation club – *http://www.totalannihilation.co.uk*
Warcraft II club – *http://www.apprentis.demon.co.uk/*

DURING the merry month of May, Wireplay finally exceeded 50,000 registered users. Quite how many of these are still using the service is unclear, and with free registration it is inevitable that some people have logged on in the past, forgotten their details and re-registered. Nevertheless, Wireplay is regularly enjoying 1,000 simultaneous log-ins, a far cry from the lonely planet it was just one year ago. Colin Duffy, Head of Games, predicts a seven per cent growth *every week*, and is confident of 3,000 to 5,000 simultaneous log-ins towards the end of the year. Hopefully Wireplay will be able to cope with the extra demands placed on its modem banks.

Muddy
MUD2
Muddy
MUD2 on Wireplay
Charts
Articles
Art
http:
Mud

One of Wireplay's managers, the upliftingly named Uprising, wants to arrange a *Quake* LAN Party. It is likely to be held on either the weekends of 24-26 July or 31 July-2 August, in Birmingham, Leeds, Leicester or London. If you're interested in taking part, you will need to bring your PC, complete with a network card and cable (these cost about £25 to buy). E-mail Uprising at *quakemeister@wireplay.com*, telling him your real name, Wireplay ID and which weekend and location you'd prefer.

Wireplay's Number 4 game, *MUD II*, has earned itself an unofficial Web site. Hosted at *http://members.xoom.com/MuddyWeb*, the new site features news, tips and an interview with the game's creator, Dr Richard Bartle.

The classic play-by-mail strategy game, Diplomacy, is now available as a play-by-e-mail game on Wireplay. Strategically bluff and lie your way to the Clubs Page on Wireplay to take part.

Wireplay now has a new *Quake* deathmatch server running the increasingly popular Get Rich *Quake* level. It's a deathmatch scenario that involves collecting money scattered around the level, or killing others and stealing their money. To prevent your hard-earned riches being similarly pilfered, you can stash your wonga in a secret hiding place. Or play as teams and let others guard the stash while you go out hunting.

If you have any comments, suggestions or complaints regarding Wireplay and the service it offers, go on-line and fill out a questionnaire. One lucky commentator wins a £20 HMV voucher.

FIGHT NIGHT!

MANIC MONDAY!

Start the week with a bang!

Monday 8th June played host to the first ever PC GAMER Manic Monday, an evening of mindless violence where the GAMER team effortlessly thrashed all other Wireplay members at *Quake*. Almost. Some tense, increasingly beery qualifying rounds where spot prizes were awarded led to a final between Kil.Picard, Wookie, Mr Chafe (Matt) and Monkey Monkey (Jim). Congratulations to Wookie who won when it counted and now has a stack of free games to play (or sell). Commiserations to Pussy for reasons that anyone who was playing that night will fully appreciate.

The PC GAMER Manic Monday is set to become a regular event *on the first Monday of every month at 7pm*. All you have to do is log on to the Wireplay Gameworlds channel, join one of the special PC GAMER servers, hope there is room and look for our red, white and black skins. And then run away. Easy really.

The next Manic Monday is 7pm on 6th July. BE THERE!

MONEY

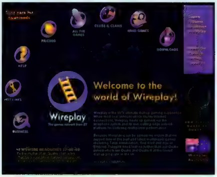
WIREPLAY PRICING

How to get the most for your money...

BT offer two ways of paying for Wireplay. The simplest, if you just want to give the service a go or don't play too often, is to use the standard Wireplay telephone number, an 0896 call that costs 6 pence per minute peak time, and 2.5 pence per minute after 6pm.

Frequent users should use the Monthly Subscription option. For £9.95 a month you can have unlimited access to the Wireplay service, and dial up using a local call number. The numbers (0845 6025483 for Game Worlds and 0845 6036030 for Rapid Play channels) can be added to your Friends & Family list, and can even be reduced by Premier Line and Best Friend discounts, resulting in calls costing about 0.65 pence per minute at weekends. A Wireplay Gold Subscription offers one year's membership for £99.50, £19.90 less than paying monthly. You may not be able to access Wireplay unless you use a BT telephone line.

We should point out in the interests of competition that there are other on-line gaming services available. You might like to try these out if you resent BT making £3 billion profit a year, you forgot to buy shares or you just like mulching about muttering, "We used to own it anyway."



INSTALLING WIREPLAY

Every month we include the Wireplay client software on CD GAMER. You can also order a free CD from Wireplay themselves by calling 0800 800918. The CD includes a multi-player version of DID's excellent *EF2000* flight simulator, a selection of card and board games including Poker and Backgammon, *Air Attack*, a flight sim that supports over 25 players, and *MUD II*, a massive multi-player role playing game.

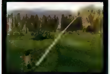
Wireplay
The games network from BT

WIREPLAY CHARTS

The Top 10 games played on Wireplay last month. A bookie in Manchester is taking bets on whether *Quake* will *ever* be displaced from the top.

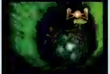
1. Quake	**(GT)**
2. Quake II	**(Activision)**
3. Duke Nukem	**(GT)**
4. MUD II	**(Wireplay)**
5. Age Of Empires	**(Microsoft)**
6. C&C: Red Alert	**(Virgin)**
7. Air Attack	**(Wireplay)**
8. Total Annihilation	**(GT)**
9. Jedi Knight	**(LucasArts)**
10. Warcraft II	**(Zablac)**

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY



Wireplay currently supports over 80 games, far and away more titles than any other on-line gaming service. The latest additions are:

Actua Golf 2
Actua Soccer 2
Cart Precision Racing
Cart Precision Racing demo
FA-18 Korea
Final Liberation
Forsaken
Forsaken Demo
Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith
Plane Crazy
Star Wars: Supremacy



Already on the Rapid Play service:

Actua Club Soccer
Age Of Empires
Age Of Empires (trial version)
Armoured Fist 2
Big Red Racing
Big Red Racing: Wireplay Edition
Blood (v1.1)
Blood Shareware (v1.1)
Comanche 3
Command & Conquer
Daytona USA Deluxe
Daytona USA Deluxe Demo
Descent
Descent II

Descent II Demo
Doom (v1.9)
Doom II
Doom Shareware
Duke Nukem 3D
EF2000: Wireplay Edition
Euro 96
Extreme Assault
F-22 Air Dominance Fighter
Formula Karts
Fragile Allegiance
G-Nome
Incubation
Jedi Knight
Microsoft Flight Sim 98

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

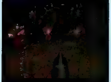
[illegible] Play service cont:

MUD II
NASCAR 2
NetMech (Mech Warrior 2)
Red Alert
Red Alert – Aftermath
Red Alert – Counterstrike
Redneck Rampage
Shadow Warrior
Shadow Warrior Shareware (v1.1)
Sid Meier's Gettysburg
Terminal Velocity
Total Annihilation
Ultimate Doom
Uprising
Virtua Fighter 2
Virtua Fighter 2 Demo
Virtual Pool

Virtual Pool 2
Virtual Snooker
Warcraft II
Warcraft II Demo

On the Mind Games server there is:

Black Maria
Cribbage
Dalmatian Pirates
Draughts
Fox & Geese
Go
Gomoku
Hex
Mancala
Nap
Nine Men's Morris
Poker



Push & Shove
Renju
Reversi
Wild West
Wireplay Bridge
Wireplay Chess

And on Games World there is:

Air Attack
Quake (39 servers)
Quake II (11 servers)

STAR GAME

FORSAKEN

Wireplay's best-looking game is proving a hit.

Sending your mate spiralling to his death in the lava is an experience worth having.

Acclaim's wonderful *Forsaken* has joined the decreasingly exclusive membership of instant 'Wireplayery'. The 3D shooter reminiscent of the head-spinning *Descent* was up and running on Wireplay the same day that it became available in the shops – Friday 15th May.

Descent has been an extremely popular multi-player game for years, and even made an appearance during the early DOS days of Wireplay. While always outplayed by *Doom,* it nevertheless created a compelling and involving deathmatch arena and a cult, travel-sick following. *Forsaken* is unashamedly the same game but with some of the most amazing graphics ever seen on a PC. No, ever seen *anywhere*.

It works on Wireplay straight out of the box and up to four players can deathmatch in a single level. To get the game going, you first need to log onto Wireplay to receive the new games list if you haven't been there lately. Set the game up in the usual way (click on the Wireplay logo in the bottom right and select Setup).

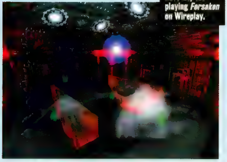
If you want to join in someone else's game, find a proposal in the locker room. Otherwise set up your own and wait for some challengers. If you've logged on during a quiet moment, you can always get Wireplay to ring you back when there are some more challengers in place, provided you've opted for the credit card membership option.

That's the easy part – the hard bit comes when there are six other bikers all intent on letting your blood. *Forsaken* is actually one of the easier games to play on-line and it boils down to three factors. First, and it might sound like a pain, it is essential to know the maps. *Forsaken's* areas are larger than *Quake* maps and so are much easier to get lost in. It's essential to be au fait with the general layout and know where the vital ambush points are. Once you have established that, it's time to master that essential skill in all games of this kind – skiffing. More commonly known as the circle strafe, this is the art of (theoretically) staying out of the enemy's fire while hitting him yourself. Jig, move in, move out and (using a quick boost of nitro) retreat if you're about to die.

These are common sense rules and they need to be modified according to which bike you are riding. Our advice, and call us cowards, is to hop on something with the hardest armour and shield if you are starting off. *Forsaken* is a tough game and a couple of missiles will mean the end of you if you're on a lighter, faster bike. If you're feeling brave, you can graduate to a lighter, faster frame but we'd recommend only doing this after having some considerable experience as this will only suit a few playing styles.

Another difference between single and multi-player play is your use of weapons. Basically, there is less need to conserve your best power-ups on-line as you could be dead at any moment. So blast away with everything you have and make the most of the short time you'll be on-line.

Familiarise yourself with all of the above and there is nothing between you, three other futuristic bikers, and your attempts to blast the buggery out of each other.



You'll need a 3D card before you have any fun playing *Forsaken* on Wireplay.

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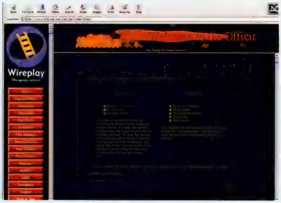
JOIN OR DIE!

CLUB: RED ALERT

We ask Sue 'Peapod' Ellis, Club Captain of the all-conquering *Red Alert*, why we should join her gang.



One of Wireplay's greatest strengths is the carefully organised social aspect of multi-player gaming. Each game and section in Wireplay has a strong sense of community, a group of like minded individuals meeting up to kill each other.

All of the major games have clubs, where members can e-mail each other, organise exclusive games and competitions, and keep track of the country-wide league ladders. Each club is headed up by a captain and a number of deputies, each of which is dedicated to helping newcomers and organising competitions.

Every issue we'll be talking to a club captain to get an insight to how it works, how to become a captain youself, the benefits, rewards and tribulations, and to find out which ones are worth joining. This month, we talk to Sue Ellis, Peapod on Wireplay, and Club Captain of the all-conquering *Red Alert*.

THE RED ALERT AWARD

Name Sue Ellis ■ **Wireplay name** PEAPOD ■ **Email address** captain@ellisweb.com ■ **Club Web site** http://www.ellisweb.com/red-alert

What does your job entail?
Running the *Red Alert* club involves quite a lot of hard work, more so off-line. I organise tournaments, update the Web site, test maps for tournaments, reply to many e-mails from members every day. Also, I help new members on *Red Alert* and Wireplay to find their feet.

Why choose *Red Alert?*
Red Alert is a fantastic game and there is always something new to learn. Six players can play at once and it is widely based on teamwork. It's not just playing the game that counts, but having fun with friends too.

How much time do you spend on this job each week?
I spend around 15 hrs on-line running tournaments and helping new members. Off-line, I spend around 20 hrs updating rankings on the Web site, e-mailing members and planning new events and ideas.

Are you expected to be on-line during club sessions, or can one of your deputies take over?
I do like to be on-line as much as I can for planned meetings, but I'm fortunate to have a wonderful deputy captain, Hogmeister, who is happy to run tournaments if I can't make it or just to give me a break. The club has 22 officials too and all of them are happy to help out in my absence.

What does a captain or deputy get for their trouble?
As captains we receive a free subscription to Wireplay and a small amount to help cover our costs. Personally, though, running a club on Wireplay is very rewarding, the tournaments are fun and many people have been brought together in real life too. It is, for me, like one big social gathering and there is always someone to chat to, at any time of the day or night.

How long have you been using Wireplay?
I have been using Wireplay for nine months now and wouldn't be without it.

How has it improved since you've been a member?
Wireplay can now accommodate more people and now that all the clubs are up and running, there is always something to do. At first, to get a game of something at 1am was a bit tricky. Now games are still going on well into the early hours of the morning.

Do you think Wireplay represents good value for money?
Yes. It may seem a little expensive to the first-time user, but with the new subscription it definitely represents value for money.

How does Wireplay compare to Internet gaming?
There is no lag on Wireplay and this makes playing brilliant. There is a different atmosphere on Wireplay. It's friendly. The Internet, although I do sometimes venture up there and have a few games, can be slow and because of the vast amount of users on Internet gaming sites it can be a little frightening not knowing anyone.

What does the Red Alert Club offer its members?
We have weekly tournaments that are great fun. All players are welcome to take part and you can score big points, climbing your way up the ladder. There is no need to register for our weekly tournies. Just turn up every Tuesday between 7pm and 10.30pm and join in the fun.

There is an official club meeting at 10pm every Saturday night in the Official *Red Alert* chat room. The aim of the meeting is to bring members together for a quick chat and discuss any suggestions you may have.

There is a club newsletter published weekly and sent to all members with e-mail. A copy will also be posted on Wireplay for those without e-mail. To receive your free copy along with the tourny map for each week, just send an e-mail to the above address including your Wireplay nickname. Newbies are welcome to contact me on-line most evenings, or by e-mail for the latest club info and help.

To join the *Red Alert* Club, or any of the many other clubs available, select the Clubs Section on the Yellow Ladder in the Wireplay software when you are on-line. Search for all clubs and select Official *Red Alert* Club.

***Red Alert* is still the most popular strategy game on Wireplay. Join up and die repeatedly.**

BECOME A CLUB CAPTAIN!

If you think you've got what it takes to run one of Wireplay's clubs (enthusiasm, money to pay the telephone bill and bags of time essential), then e-mail Wireplay. At the time of publication there are vacancies for *Actua Soccer 2*, *Total Annihilation*, *Poker* and *MechWarrior 2*, but you can suggest your own ideas for a club.

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PC review
SIZE MATTERS
CD review
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PC GAMER

PC GAMER

REVIEWS

The best-selling game ever heads up our reviews this month.

Home to spiky-haired heroes, wide-eyed heroines, and more flying fortresses and androgynous nemeses than you could ask for, it's Japan that arguably leads the world in creative weirdness.

Never afraid to throw conflicting game styles into the development pot before stirring vigorously and adding a large pinch of Far Eastern eye candy, the games of Japan are instantly recognisable for their peculiarity.

Final Fantasy VII is the first of the best-selling Japanese series to make the crossover from console to PC, and all the elements that made the PlayStation version such a success have thankfully made the translation. Epic in scale, visually disparate, and offering more genuine surprises than Cilla ever managed to produce, *FFVII* is a meticulously designed futuristic RPG that's as fun to watch as it is to play.

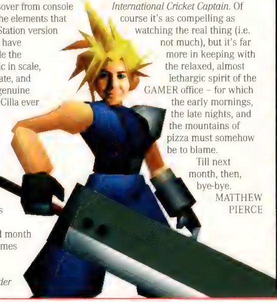
It's a good month for strategy games too, with *Commandos*, *MechCommander* and *The Sentinel Returns* all scoring above 80%. Each represents a different enough challenge to warrant a look, with *The Sentinel*, in particular, reviving one of the most original game premises of all time, before updating it with the quality of visuals we've come to expect from PC games.

We're also pleased to note that the amount of football releases has diminished (for the moment). *Sensible Soccer World Cup 98* excepted, it seems the industry has finally shot its bolt – soccer-wise.

And with the summer now fully upon us, sports fans can turn to the far more sedate, civilised pursuit of cricket thanks to Empire's *International Cricket Captain*. Of course it's as compelling as watching the real thing (i.e. not much), but it's far more in keeping with the relaxed, almost lethargic spirit of the GAMER office – for which the early mornings, the late nights, and the mountains of pizza must somehow be to blame.

Till next month, then, bye-bye.

MATTHEW PIERCE



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OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS

JAMES FLYNN is an expert on puddings. The difference between a charlotte and a crumble, he says, interestingly, is far greater than you might think.

MARK DONALD bought one of Captain Sensible's hats in a furious bidding war. The final asking price was just shy of a tenner.

MATTHEW PIERCE has devised a universally recognised equation for determining the mean distance between a lemur's two front paws.

JES BICKHAM [illegible] Duncan Goodhew in order to secure lucrative supermarket openings and guest appearances at charity functions.

RICHARD LONGHURST likes playing games with small boys (but only because he has two of his own, you understand). How sweet.

STEVE OWEN keeps a small ass in his front garden. He enjoys [illegible] it down on hot summer days and feeding it turnips.

JON SMITH has the most common name in the UK. On last count, he had over 12,000 clones and a Scottish biologist in his house.

ED RICKETTS moves by lunchtime. A sandwich-eating creature at heart, he is not to be messed with after a pint of the evil Tanglefoot.

HOW WE SCORE

[illegible] [illegible] most perfect [illegible] and one [illegible] will bring [illegible] of fondness [illegible] our eyes [illegible] to come [illegible] the classics [illegible] up here.

[illegible] An excellent game – technically impressive and very enjoyable. It will become the proud owner of our Game of Distinction logo.

[illegible] Plenty of [illegible] had here, but something important is missing. If yo[illegible] a fan of the [illegible] it might be w[illegible] a closer look.

[illegible]–69% [illegible] overall [illegible] but perhaps [illegible] keep the [illegible] of have [illegible]

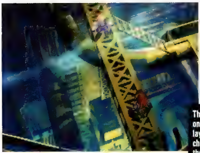
30%–49% Something has [illegible] wrong. This game doesn't deserve an inch of shop shelf space and in all likelihood will [illegible]

0%–29% A [illegible] document is [illegible] be [illegible] immediately [illegible] the programmers should think [illegible] their careers.

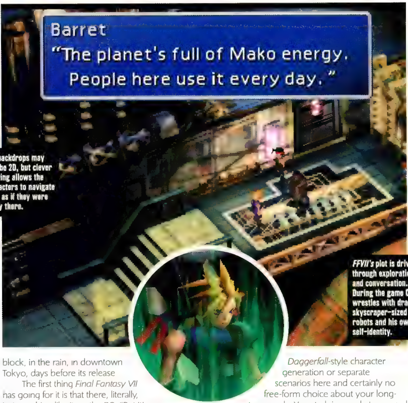
PC GAMER GAME OF THE MONTH AUGUST 1998

FINAL FANTASY VII

It's role-playing, Jim, but not as we know it.



The backdrops may only be 2D, but clever layering allows the characters to navigate them as if they were really there.



Barret
“The planet's full of Mako energy. People here use it every day.”

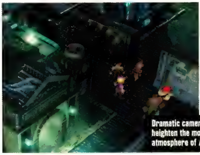
FFVII's plot is driven through exploration and conversation. During the game Cloud wrestles with dragons, skyscraper-sized robots and his own self-identity.

THE PC vs Console battlefield is a harsh and unforgiving place. Each side constantly firing ever more impressive salvos across its post-apocalyptic (and fully texture-mapped) terrain in an effort to prove that only *its* ways are best. Look, over there. A crack detachment of *Quake II* has engaged a complement of *GoldenEye* on the north ridge! A hideous sight to see, but some lovely light sourcing, nevertheless.

In this, admittedly rather contrived, scenario *Final Fantasy VII* is a behind-the-lines infiltrator. (By the way, don't worry about the other six *Final Fantasys* – in *FF* land the story and characters are different every time so you're not missing anything by being a *Final Fantasy* novice.) It's snuck in from down the PlayStation's blind side and is trying to pass itself off as cutting-edge PC entertainment; painfully oblivious to the golden 'rule' that console-style games just don't work on the PC. *FFVII's* obviously never seen the twitching corpses of Sony's *Resident Evil* and most of Sega's PC conversions – come on, *Last Bronx* anyone? Still, let's all have an open mind and remember just how massively successful these games really are. The PlayStation version of *Final Fantasy VII* has, after all, sold more that six million (that's *six* million) copies worldwide since it appeared last year. This is the title that had the Japanese queuing round the block, in the rain, in downtown Tokyo, days before its release

> **"The multi-layered plot twists and turns its way to a momentous climax."**

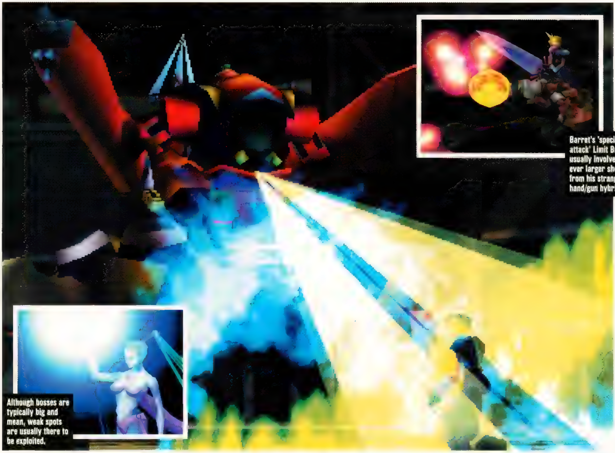
The first thing *Final Fantasy VII* has going for it is that there, literally, isn't anything like it on the PC. “But it's an RPG!” you may cry defiantly, “we've got those by the bucketload.” Ah, but *FFVII* is a *different kind of RPG* - it's a... er... *Japanese* RPG which doesn't really... um... mean Role-Playing Game as we know and love it on the PC. A more apt acronym (if slightly less catchy) would be 'ISBwB' interactive Story Book with Battles. There's no *Daggerfall*-style character generation or separate scenarios here and certainly no free-form choice about your long-term goals. Your task is merely to unravel the story as written. But as that would make it pretty much like the other PC adventures we all know and love but without the point and click, *Final Fantasy VII* has to have more to offer. And wouldn't you know it it does.



Dramatic camera angles heighten the movie-like atmosphere of *FFVII.*

For a start, the story offers about a thousand times more imagination than most PC games. The developers, Square, have come up with a multi layered plot which twists and turns its way to the momentous climax. The Shin-Ra Electric Company is controlling the planet using an energy source which is slowly sucking the planet dry. The hero, Cloud, used to be part of the Army, but has since turned mercenary. Not an easy task in itself, as it emerges that Cloud is in some way a product of the Evil Electric Corporation. Heroes die, they battle with their own egos and scores of be-suited Manga businessmen are dispatched in the quest for Right. And it'll all take you about 150 hours' worth of playing to discover the entire truth

To be honest, there are so many



Barret's 'special attack' Limit Break usually involves ever larger shots from his strange hand/gun hybrid.

Although bosses are typically big and mean, weak spots are usually there to be exploited.

Visionary

diverse elements in the game that it's hard to know where to start. But breaking it down cold and analytically (to try and demonstrate the greatness of this unique game) it falls, roughly, into the following:

LUCASARTS QUALITY ADVENTURE

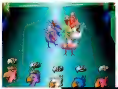
The *FF* world is big. Scrap that, it's huge, but *FFVII* is designed so that you can't just go anywhere you like and become hopelessly lost and unfocussed Oh no, that would be too easy. Lack of transport, rivers and even separate continents all bar your way (until the story decrees that you need to go there, anyway). But after wandering about on the real-time, spin it around every which way you like, world map you'll eventually reach a town or some such place of interest. Many of the locations are movie-like in their brilliance, with stunningly designed, rendered, backdrops and dynamic camera angles that can have your character as a dot on the landscape one minute and up against the lens larger than life, the next. And for once, the FMV fits perfectly. The plot advancing movies are short and slip in and out of the action seamlessly and there are even sections where ⇨

RANDOM ACTS OF VIOLENCE

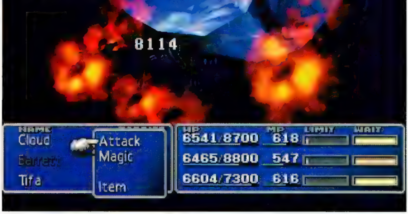
One of the hardest things to get used to in *Final Fantasy VII* (and Japanese RPGs in general) is the way you don't have any idea just when you're going to have to fight. One minute you're walking along quite happily admiring the scenery, nothing around for miles, then – blap! – it's a quick switch to the battle screen and you're knee deep in Sea Worms! This random battle encounter is par for the course in most Japanese RPGs, but tends to divide Westerners who either suffer it as a game trait they have to adapt to or loathe it as the Devil's own system from hell. Most tend to suffer it with only mild aggravation when the game decides that you will fight after every other step. The battles are such an integral part of *Final Fantasy VII* that merely wanting to avoid them all the time seems a bit pointless.

Fighting battles is essential. Always taking the coward's way out means that come boss time you'll be severely underpowered.

Out on the World Map everything switches to proper 3D. It's a big and dangerous place.



Should you want to discover all of *FFVII's* secrets then you'll have to get used to breeding and racing the ostrich-like Chocobos.



This is how a battle looks. Your characters' names, actions and stats are along the bottom. The mayhem they are causing is in the window. The longer the game goes on, the more graphically outrageous the battles become.

> **"For much of the time the fighting is as enjoyable as the exploring."**

it blends right in with the playing screen. It's nothing short of genius basically and makes pretty much all PC rendering that has gone before look totally inadequate in scale and ambition.

DUNGEON MASTER FIGHTING

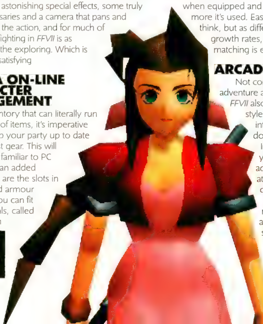
At any time (although, strangely enough, not when you're in the vicinity of shops and houses) you and your party are open to attack by any of the hideous monstrosities that roam the land. You can't see them, but they're always after you (see 'Random acts of violence').

Although the combat is acted out, tabletop style, by taking turns and using a menu system, plenty of thought has gone into hiding away all the potentially stupefying numbers parts and making things as exciting as possible. Each character (and there can be three in your party at any one time – see 'It's my party') has their own 'time' bar that, when full, allows them to make an attack. As the bars fill up at different rates, depending on a number of factors, it can soon get almost 'arcade-like' as you flick through menus in an effort to loose off spells and attacks. Combine this with wave after wave of astonishing special effects, some truly bizarre adversaries and a camera that pans and dives around the action, and for much of the time the fighting in *FFVII* is as enjoyable as the exploring. Which is wonderfully satisfying

While he may not seem *that* menacing, fat bloke here will still give you a run for your money.

ULTIMA ON-LINE CHARACTER MANAGEMENT

With an inventory that can literally run to hundreds of items, it's imperative that you keep your party up to date with the latest gear. This will sound more familiar to PC owners, but an added complication are the slots in weapons and armour into which you can fit special crystals, called Materia. Each Materia (and there are around eighty of several different types) gives a character special abilities when equipped and will grow in power the more it's used. Easy enough, you may think, but as different kit gives different growth rates, careful mixing and matching is essential.



ARCADE PARTS

Not content with just an adventure and full combat system, *FFVII* also has plenty of arcade-style sub-games to chuck into the equation, no doubt just because it can. Indeed, at one point your motley bunch of adventurers even end up at a giant entertainment complex complete with playable arcade machines, a race track and even a 3D snowboarding racer.

Suffice to say that you'd be hard pushed to think of

NAME	BARRIER	HP	MP	LIMIT
Barret		7222/8900	615	
Tifa		5219/6500	476	
Aerith		6177/8200	923	

Having trouble finishing off the dreaded elevator robot? You'll need to summon your friendly dragon – Bahamaut – with atomic breath. Naturally.

Every nook and cranny is begging to be explored in *FFVII*.

something that's not in there in some form. Strategy game? Yep there's a mini 'assign your units' point-and-click bit in there as well.

However, there are some aspects that niggle. Not problems with the game, per se, but it does grate somewhat when: a) a game that, on the PlayStation, runs straight from a CD in a paltry 2Mb of memory with little or no disc access, actually installs a whopping 300Mb of files on your PC's hard drive and requires 32Mb RAM just to start up at all; and b) little or no thought seems to have been paid to the fact that although the cast of super-smooth, Gouraud-shaded characters and monsters benefit greatly from 3Dfx support, the clever pre-rendered backdrops they inhabit don't appear to have been paid the same kind of attention. At a full 640x480 res they can seem a tad pixelly and although this is probably because the renders were originally designed for TV viewing and it was just too expensive and time consuming to re-render them (after all, legend has it that the originals tied up nearly all the SGI rendering kit available throughout the whole of Japan during the game's programming), the characters don't seem to blend with them quite as well as they did on the telly.

But these are minor hardware hassles. As a game, *FFVII* is superbly thought out. Okay, the plot may sag here and there and the problem of levelling up your characters to a degree where they're able to cope with the harder bosses means a lot of, potentially tiresome, fighting, but *Final Fantasy VII* is still one of the only games I've ever played where I cared about how the story ended rather than how big and flash the graphic for the final boss would be (and it is big and flash). It's awesome and compelling in equal measures and contains FMV that you'd actually quite like to see again. And if you still hanker after some beardy stats and numbers, the character toughening and Materia system offer a decent enough amount of character tweakage and analysis. Hell, you've got to admire a game where you can even breed and race birds!

If you've never played a Japanese adventure, *Final Fantasy VII* will hit you square in the chest. However, persevere (the difficulty curve is tough at the start) and you will be rewarded with as much tactical gaming pleasure and story-line as the PC has to offer.

WILL OVERTON

IT'S MY PARTY

Final Fantasy's main character is Cloud (he of sticky-up bouffant and overly large blade) and it is he who you'll mostly control. But during the story you'll accumulate up to eight others, all of whom have histories and stories to tell. Providing they're about (and there's no certainty that they'll all make it to the end – the story can get pretty heavy in places) you can choose two to follow Cloud about as he goes adventuring. It's a mark of top Japanese character design that none of them have to resort to the usual stereotypes: bland muscle-bound white male or Barbie-figured white female with Spacehopper proportion mammaries. Our favourite has got to be Cid, though, the top pilot who goes into battle complete with a smouldering stoogie clamped between his teeth. Give him a bomb to throw and he'll nonchalantly light the fuse with his cigar butt before throwing it into the fray.

■ Publisher **Eidos** ■ Developer **Square Soft** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **P166, 32Mb, Windows 95** ■ Recommended **Pentium II, 32Mb RAM, 3D card** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx** ■ Multi-Player **None** ■ Web Address ■ **http://www.eidos.co.uk** ■ Release Date **Mid-July**

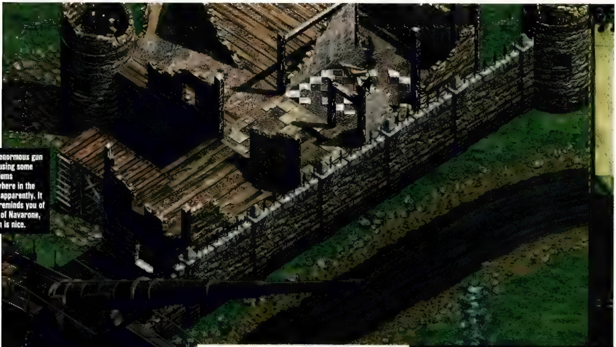
PC GAMER

Unique, exhilarating, jaw-dropping fun from the other side of the globe.

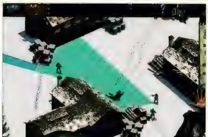
93%

COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Patience is a virtue. And you're going to have to be particularly virtuous to get any enjoyment out of Pyro's latest.



This enormous gun is causing some problems elsewhere in the war, apparently. It also reminds you of Guns of Navarone, which is nice.

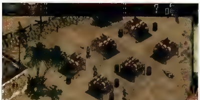


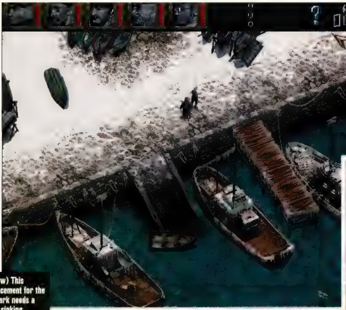
(Left) While some people suggest that you should avoid the yellow snow, we simply suggest that you avoid the snow altogether, or risk leaving footprints.

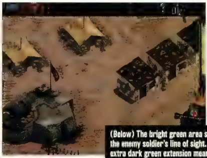
IT is generally believed that commandos are as hard as the proverbial nails. Like Blackpool rock. Tough doesn't even get halfway there. It turns out that, in Eidos' Big Book of History, the commandos started during the Second World War, with soldiers deliberately selected from our armies to infiltrate and take out enemy installations. Each was picked for their strength and ability to handle a multitude of weapons and equipment. Unfortunately, despite my interest, I was thrown out of History in my third year for locking the teacher in a cupboard, so I'll have to take the Eidos' word for it.

Putting my hideous education to one side for a minute, there is the basis for a classic game here. You control a team of commandos (see 'Russell, meet Sid'), each of which has a number of specific skills. Discovery Channel style FMV clips and mission briefings give an impression of realism, but the game proper opts for fantasy to make things easier for itself. So, only sappers can handle explosives, only marines can scuba dive, only green berets can pick up barrels and only spies and drivers have first aid kits. It's an illogical frustration in a game that, in most other departments, tries to be accurate.

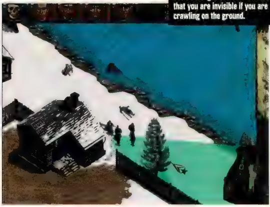
In essence, *Commandos* is a real-time game,



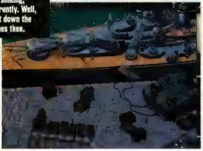


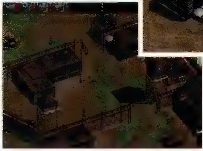


(Below) The bright green area shows the enemy soldier's line of sight. An extra dark green extension means that you are invisible if you are crawling on the ground.



(Below) This replacement for the Bismark needs a good sinking, apparently. Well, sail it down the Thames then.





Tough

but one that borrows ideas from the work of the Gollop brothers, developers of the *X-COM* and *Laser Squad* series. In the 20 available missions, you control between one and five commandos and each man is a specialist – the aforementioned sappers, marines, green berets, spies and drivers. Every mission must be approached in a specific way, with whatever specialists you're given all having a job to do. Trial and error will teach you that you need a driver to use an enemy gun emplacement but a green beret to knife the previous occupant.

> **"Occasionally feels like an inhibiting experience."**

This rigid demarcation between specialists sometimes goes over the top and can occasionally make *Commandos* feel like an inhibiting experience. Surely any of the team could move an explosive barrel? If the driver dies, could someone else not just pick up the machine gun and use it? However, this role-playing lies at the heart of the missions and just takes the unit responsibilities we've seen in previous strategy games to an extreme.

Each mission is focussed around destroying a final objective. En route you must secure several staging areas and get all your men across in one piece to finish the job. To this aim they arrive with a DIY sabotage kit split between them. Spades, knives, a compass, a boat, wire-cutters, harpoon – you name it, it's in their back pocket. Use the split-screen mode, the line-of-sight indicator, the tracking camera and the map to help you bring these to bear, but more importantly than all those, perfect the game-beating technique of coaxing the guards round a blind corner and shooting them as they appear. Simple but effective.

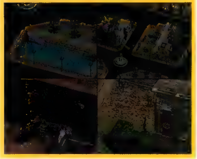
As are the host of lovely touches throughout the game. Footprints in the snow fade with time, you can hide enemy bodies, dress up in German gear and harpoon guards. Each

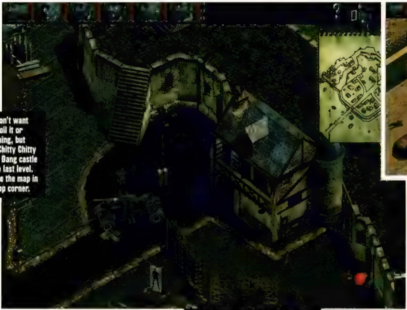
⇨

FLY-EYE VIEW

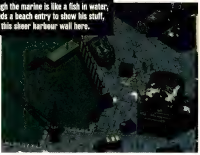
Success in *Commandos* requires an almost super-human, no, divine omnipotence. But while God sees all and knows everything using a kind of dimensional awareness that we can't even imagine with our puny brains, *Commandos* opts for an omnipresent concept that we can comprehend. So that you can know what is going on where, and perhaps follow each of your characters as they do their tough stuff, you can use a variety of split-screen scenarios, with each of up to six panes following part of the level at a particular zoom level. You might, for instance, have one large pane for your current character, with two smaller ones locking on the dangerous soldiers. It isn't really the position of the soldiers that counts, but his field of view. Unfortunately only one guard's green view cone can be seen at a time, so even having several panes open doesn't help you know if you are about to be spotted without guessing.

The zoom option is a tidy little feature, but is rarely used. Zooming out is handy at times so that you can see an entire soldier's patrol, or you can keep an eye on approaching guards, but zooming in just makes the game too blocky. You might opt to play at a high resolution of 1024x768, but in that case you will zoom in just so that you can see what's going on.





We don't want to spoil it or anything, but this Chitty Chitty Bang Bang castle is the last level. Notice the map in the top corner.

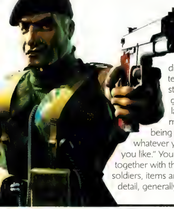


Although the marine is like a fish in water, he needs a beach entry to show his stuff, unlike this sheer harbour wall here.

⇨ commando's unique abilities open the game up massively – even by the later levels it's still satisfying to bury yourself in the snow and leap up and knife the enemy as they pass.

However, many of the available actions are not always helped by the slightly clunky control system. There's nothing wrong with Pyro's decisions as such – it just never becomes instinctive like *Warcraft II's* or *Red Alert's*. You can only shoot when standing up, do not know how far your shot will go before drawing, and it's impossible to move and fire at the same time. There is a shortcut key to draw a gun, but sneaking up on an enemy is a stop-start process of running, drawing, running again and just as you're almost there the guard will turn round. Perhaps the right mouse button could have been used for movement.

There are problems, though, and how significant you find these depends on where you put your gaming emphasis. *Commandos* gives the impression that you can go anywhere and tackle a mission in any way you see fit with the crew at your disposal, but only tells you half the story. It's like being given a microwave lasagne and a microwave and being told, "Cook whatever you fancy how you like." Your instructions, together with the position of the soldiers, items and background detail, generally mean that there is only one way to complete the mission correctly. Rather than thinking on your feet to find an ingenious solution (arguably, like a real commando would), you have to divine the correct path. There are variations but they are minor, and the game is so unforgiving that a mistake late on will see you back at square one within seconds.



> "A smidgen less than what we hoped for."

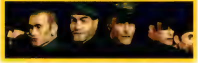
Also, if a guard is a fair distance away, you can't shoot them, but once they've spotted you you'll be gunned down with impunity from half way across the map. The key to preventing this, of course, is to avoid being spotted – a process made easier thanks to the excellent line of sight indicators you can conjure up for individual guards.

Much of *Commandos* requires the use of stealth and sneaking up on the enemy from behind. This usually involves a tense wait as you determine their pre-set patrol patterns. Map and radar views can be selected from the control panel but disappear as soon as you try to do something else, and it's remarkably easy to lose touch of the Germans without them.

RUSSELL, MEET SID

From left to right, this is your team...

Russell 'Inferno' Hancock – Sapper
The explosives expert equipped with a mantrap and pistol, and capable of using various explosives.
Sir Francis 'Duke' Woolridge – Sniper
Pretty good shot and a bit of a toff. Carries pistol, zooming precision rifle and first aid kit.
Jerry 'Tiny' McHale – Green Beret
Good at close range with a knife, and carries pistol, knife, decoy radio and pick-axe. Can also climb walls, hide bodies and bury himself.
Sid Perkins – Driver
Can commandeer, repair and drive just about anything. Carries pistol, sub-machine gun and first aid kit.
Rene 'Spooky' Duchamp – Spy
Can play a German Officer with the right uniform, and useful with his lethal poison injections. Carries first aid kit and can hide bodies.
James 'Fins' Blackwood – Marine
Commandeers and pilots boats, scuba dives undetected and useful at close range with a harpoon gun.



There's no denying that *Commandos* is an original and very challenging game. The boys' own heroics and behind-the-lines skullduggery make a refreshing change from the usual PC diet of first-person blasting and *Red Alert*-style tactical strategy. What should be tired overhead graphics are extremely pleasant and the range of missions is varied if incredibly difficult. There is no way that you will finish this game in a hurry, and the regular use of the save option is essential. There's even a multi-player option, but this is a mite disappointing – one to four players compete in one of the standard scenarios but play as a team.

In all, then, *Commandos* has class, character and individuality, but it's also a smidgen less than what we hoped for. The inevitable sequel should be stunning, using as it will more atmospheric technology and overhauling the control mechanism, but ultimately this is something of a diamond-encrusted disappointment. **STEVE OWEN**

■ Publisher **Eidos** ■ Developer **Pyro Studios** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **P120, 16Mb RAM, Win95** ■ Recommended **P166, 32Mb RAM** ■ Graphics Accelerator **None** ■ Multi-Player **TCP/IP network, Internet** ■ Web Address **http://www.eidosinteractive.com/commandos** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

Some lovely ideas, but isn't as accomplished as it thinks it is.

80%

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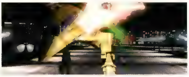
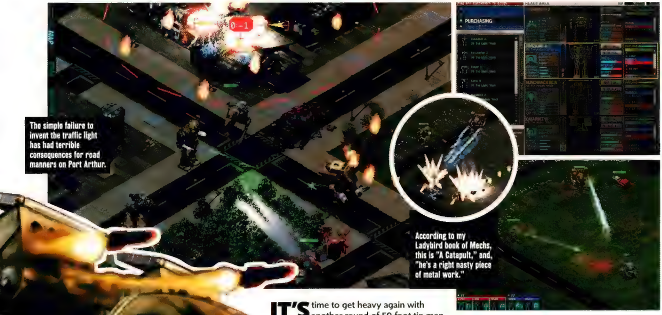
MECH COMMANDER



Well blow my restraining bolt, beaucoup big 'bots buy the farm.



The simple failure to invent the traffic light has had terrible consequences for road manners on Port Arthur.

According to my Ladybird book of Mechs, this is "A Catapult," and, "he's a right nasty piece of metal work."

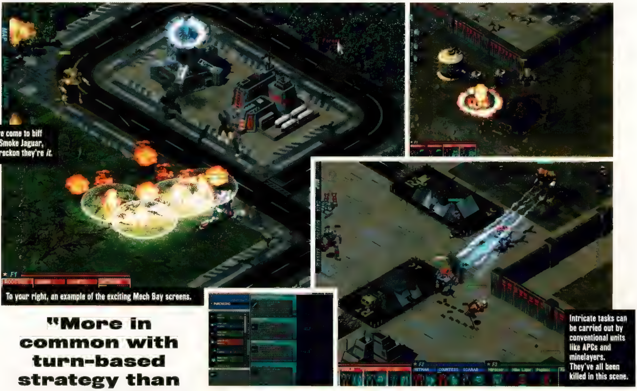
IT'S time to get heavy again with another round of 50-foot tin men knocking the nuts off one another in the very violent 30th Millennium. But, unlike the riveting action in the *MechWarrior* games, *MechCommander* plucks us from the first-person and dumps us in top-down control of a veritable throng of Mechs. Yes, the metal lackeys dance to your tune now in a real-time strategy game that owes less than most to grandpappy *C&C*.

Presumably there's something about wearing 75 tons of chrome catsuit that makes you feel you can do whatever you bloody well please, because FASA have produced a game that stands apart from the clone crowd. It expects you to be a thinker as well as a fighter, not to mention lover, of pixel life, as your forces carry over from one mission to the next. Even in the biggest battles you won't control much more than a dozen Mechs, so every one of your cyber-charges must be shepherded through combat like Prince Philip about to give the foreign press a piece of his mind. Which means the time-honoured RTS method of dragging every unit into a big ball formation to roll over the opposition just doesn't work. Bewilderingly. What is required is a considered period of stubble-stroking to work out how best to commit your Mechs to the fray, and then some fairly shrewd tactical manoeuvring once everyone's fighting and having a lovely time. The cost of such intricacy is a slow-paced game that has more in common with turn based strategy than the ham-fisted frenzied-mob brawling of *C&C* and its brotherhood of instant gratification.

Every mission follows a familiar procedure. As it turns out, your Inner Sphere forces are on a junket to Planet Port Arthur. Here you are heavily outnumbered by your Clan enemy, and so must fall back on all your reserves of bestial cunning and schooling in the art of 'Kick 'Em in the Goolies and Run'. Thus the campaign runs like an elementary lesson in guerrilla warfare. Missions revolve around blowing up key installations and then bugging out to extraction points; rescuing captured fellows; holding out against superior attacking forces for a certain length of time; looting scarce supplies from enemy bases, that sort of thing. But, before you even get a sniff of an enemy Mech, the briefing and Mech workshop must be given their due.

> **"A game that stands apart from the clone crowd."**

Unlike the mission briefings in most other games I've seen, which say little more helpful than


You've come to biff Clan Smoke Jaguar, who reckon they're *it.*

To your right, an example of the exciting Mech Bay screens.

Intricate tasks can be carried out by conventional units like APCs and minelayers. They've all been killed in this scene.

> **"More in common with turn-based strategy than the ham-fisted frenzied-mob brawling of C&C."**

Weighty

"Here there be dragons", *MechCommander* pays out a little info jackpot: providing intelligence on enemy positions, likely movements, key targets and tactical advice on how your objectives may be achieved. It's a splendid idea which would win wild applause if it wasn't so drearily presented that I could barely bring myself to read it.

The Mech Bay section provokes similar emotions. It's visited between missions and is a one-stop, drag 'n' drop, outfitting shop. Yeah. It's *MechCommander's* answer to resource management and it's where your metal romper suits are accessorised with all manner of hull-breaching tools. The Mechs you begin with amount to little more than jumped-up zimmer frames. Fortunately, for every job well done you earn extra 'credits' that can be splashed on beefier Mechs and weapons that look the part. You also have to customise your force as your dropship transport capacity is limited and each mission has different specialist requirements. So, you may decide to leave behind the heavy, bristling with-guns Mech you took for the last defensive mission in favour of a long-striding gazelle of a Mech, with advanced sensors, for a mission which requires delicate reconnaissance of enemy strong points. Pilots (who gain experience with every battle) can also be rotated to bring their various skills to bear and it's a joyously simple system to use. Yet it does look rubbish. A lot of time is spent in the Mech Bay, and two years ago *MissionForce: Cyberstorm* used excellent wire-frame animations to enhance the mood. But someone at FASA reckoned it would be great if the *MechCommander* version looked like stat tables in the BattleMech manuals. They were wrong.

They were even more wrong about the game engine, which has dated more horribly than spandex. It's badly coloured, drawn, animated and textured. It does nothing to convey the drama inherent in giant war machines of the future battering each other to death.

Fortunately, *MechCommander* plays better than it looks. Once you've got your team of scrap merchants planet-side, the game's softly-softly approach to RTS works reasonably well. Instead of the common tedium of having to scour every living thing from the map, the missions are thoughtfully surgical. By scouting out enemy positions with 'silent running' Mechs you can bypass their strong points undetected, before smashing through the weak link in the defence. Then, with the target liquidated, you can withdraw to the dust-off zone. It's a much greater tactical challenge than the average RTS game. Evading combat is a great way to conserve Mechs but may mean you face stiffer opposition later when the unscathed enemy forces home in on your position. The AI is also unusually responsive as your unattended Mechs are at least able to stall the enemy long enough for you to get to them, rather than just taking it in the face in the traditional manner

Significantly the enemy's a bit of a dullard and doesn't really act cohesively apart from when he's making pre-programmed responses. Which you'll see him do a lot because the very tough missions, coupled with the fact that you can't really afford to lose a Mech, mean you'll be reloading often. And you'll have to start from the beginning as you can't save in-mission. Moreover, the meticulous tactical positioning demanded breaks the game up into a series of set-pieces which drains the game of free-flowing fun; while its tactical thrills are reduced by unimaginative maps, the lack of decent interaction with the terrain and your Mechs limited abilities.

Ultimately, though, *MechCommander* is a solid piece with fully working parts, but it does lack polish.

MARK DONALD

■ Publisher **MicroProse** ■ Developer **FASA** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **P133, 16Mb RAM, x4 CD-ROM, Windows 95** ■ Recommended **P166, 32Mb RAM, x8 CD-ROM** ■ Graphics Accelerator **None** ■ Multi-Player **None** ■ Web Address **http://www.fasa.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

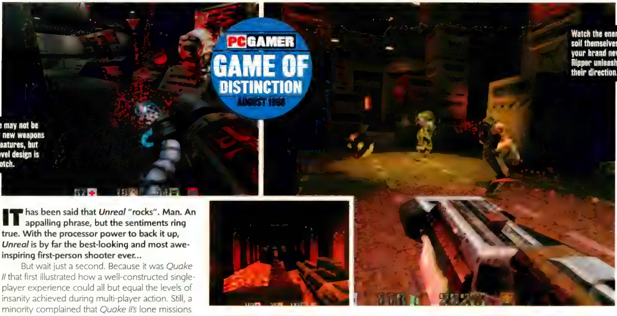
PC GAMER

Engaging robo-strategy that pleases tactically but lacks scope.

81%

QUAKE II THE RECKONING

Quake II Part 2 is no number two, but it's too hard for tutu-wearers.



PC GAMER GAME OF DISTINCTION AUGUST 1998

Watch the enemies soil themselves as your brand new Ion Ripper unleashes in their direction.

There may not be many new weapons or creatures, but the level design is top notch.

IT has been said that *Unreal* "rocks". Man. An appalling phrase, but the sentiments ring true. With the processor power to back it up, *Unreal* is by far the best-looking and most awe-inspiring first-person shooter ever...

But wait just a second. Because it was *Quake II* that first illustrated how a well-constructed single-player experience could all but equal the levels of insanity achieved during multi-player action. Still, a minority complained that *Quake II's* lone missions were too linear, too simple and too short – so it's to those few individuals that Xatrix appear to have directed *The Reckoning*.

> "Throws packs of the rock-dwelling beasts at you."

As mission packs go, with their standard pot pourri of new weapons, monsters and levels, this first official Id-endorsed release starts off quite disappointingly. With only one truly new creature to speak of – the acid-spitting, yellow-skinned Gekk – Xatrix appear to play all their cards in the opening level by throwing packs of the rock-dwelling beasts at you inside the first ten minutes.

As a result, the only other additional creature – a feeble, floating drone that can resurrect the corpses of your victims creating undead foes – has something of an anonymous debut, then puts up negligible resistance to your shots and, more often than not, simply ignores you.

Nails

But whereas the selection of new weapons is similarly meagre, they're far more successful. The new Ion Ripper is a useful alternative to the Hyperblaster, its pulses ricocheting off walls and around corners; the Phalanx Cannon is a slow but satisfyingly heavyweight addition that fires two glowing balls of magnesium; and the third new weapon is an Energy Trap, which pulls in nearby enemies and converts them into a cube of food.

However, where *The Reckoning* really excels is in its level design and the finely tuned difficulty with the ratio of creatures to ammunition superbly regulated throughout. Out of the four massive units, the first two are sprawling affairs, demanding that you regularly travel between them in order to complete goals which include power cube and airstrike marker collection. The latter half of the game is much tighter in structure. Ammo is severely limited, modified Gladiators, Super Tanks and Iron Maidens are placed liberally throughout, and objectives become time sensitive – stopping the auto-destruct sequence while aboard a Strogg freighter is a particularly stressful affair.

The Reckoning certainly isn't for beginners. On medium skill level, it takes a good *Quake* player a few days of solid play to complete it, while on hard you'll find yourself avoiding creatures in a bid to conserve ammo. In short, there's no let-up in the action; it's as tough as a leather sandwich, but it's no less enjoyable for that.

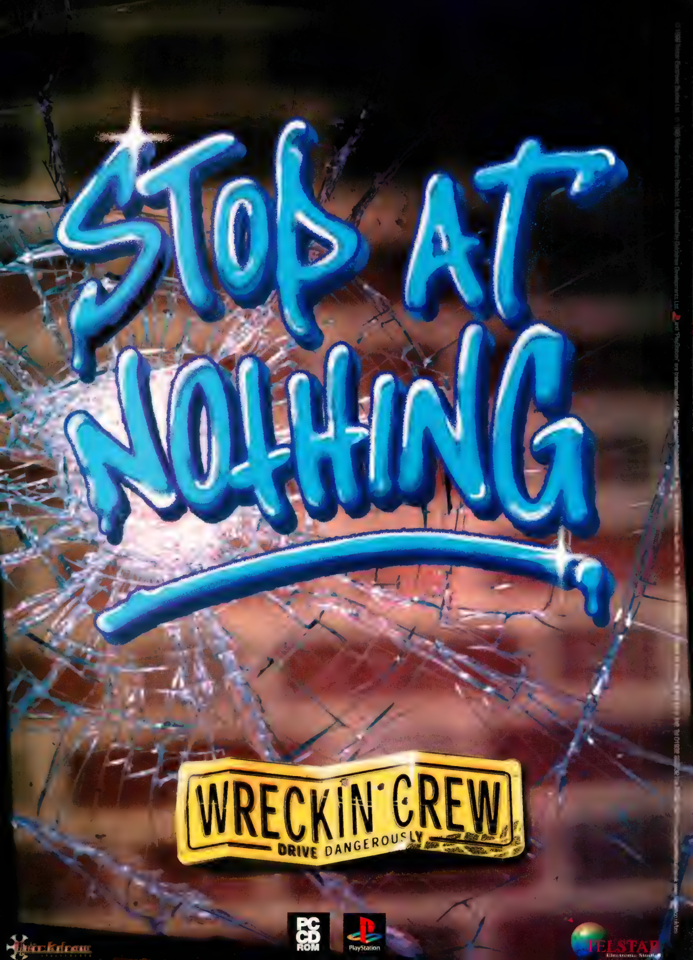
MATTHEW PIERCE

■ Publisher **Activision** ■ Developer **Xatrix** ■ Price **£25** ■ Minimum System **Quake II, P90, 16Mb RAM, Win95** ■ Recommended System **P166, 32Mb RAM, 3D card** ■ Multi-Player **Network, modem, Internet** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx, PowerVR, D3D** ■ Web Address **http//:www.activision.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

Extremely difficult, but well-designed, lengthy extension to *Quake II*.

86%


STOP AT NOTHING
WRECKIN CREW
DRIVE DANGEROUSLY
PC CD ROM
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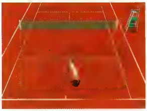
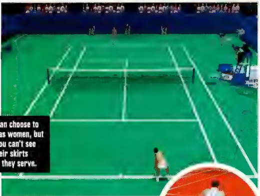
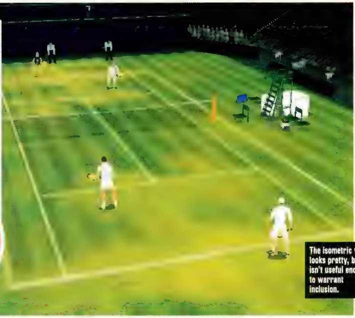
GAME, NET & MATCH



Blue Byte give us an on-line tennis game. Surely they're courting disaster. (Groan)



You can choose to play as women, but no, you can't see up their skirts when they serve.



The isometric view looks pretty, but it isn't useful enough to warrant inclusion.

TENNIS is a strangely compelling game. One fortnight every year, the whole country loves it. Previously sane individuals camp overnight on the streets of south-west London – and all just to watch some covers being pulled over thinning grass and spend a month's salary on a punnet of fruit. I'm sure it says something about this country's 'never say die' spirit, that we continue to believe Tim Henman stands any chance, and that Greg 'Maple Leaf' Rusedski is even one eighth British.

Our lack of interest once the competition's over, though, reveals that tennis – like exhibition domino toppling and bare-knuckle fist fighting – is still a minority sport in the UK. The punnily titled *Game, Net & Match*, however, believes you'll want your fix of tennis 'action' perennially – being a predominantly multi-player oriented simulation.

"It's tragic that the game's ultimately so annoying."

Faulty

Indeed, *GN&M* can be played over the Internet via Blue Byte's own dedicated server, and tournaments, doubles matches, or simple singles games can be indulged in with faceless opponents around the world. It's this option that's by far the most successful element of the game. The single-player games available being blighted by some of the most feeble opponents you're likely to see in a sports sim.

Serving – which requires simple mastery of placing an errant cursor in the opponent's court – can almost always be followed by a jog to the net, and a point-winning volley. Even when receiving serves, the computer player seems loathe to move in on the net – preferring a bland baseline game.

There are six shots to choose from (normal, top spin, drop shot, lob and left/right slices), and each is also affected by the position of the player when the shot's struck. Additionally, more power can be achieved by holding the key down longer, and placing your shot can be achieved by holding down the directional keys at the same time.

In fact, *Game, Net & Match* is so packed with options – including different court surfaces, player stats, camera angles and a practice mode – that it's tragic the game's ultimately so annoying.

Against a human opponent, after points are won or lost, players insist on mincing back to their baseline as slowly as possible – acceptable at first deathly tedious after two sets. Plus, the graphics, for all their 3D card enhancements, are poor. Backdrops look like they've been put together with one eye on the clock, male players appear to possess breasts, and the collision detection 'twixt racket and ball is occasionally very debatable.

If it's Internet play you're after, there's unfortunately no other choice. Otherwise, seek out *Tennis Elbow* – or, failing that, dust your Speccy down and get Psion's *Match Point* on the go.

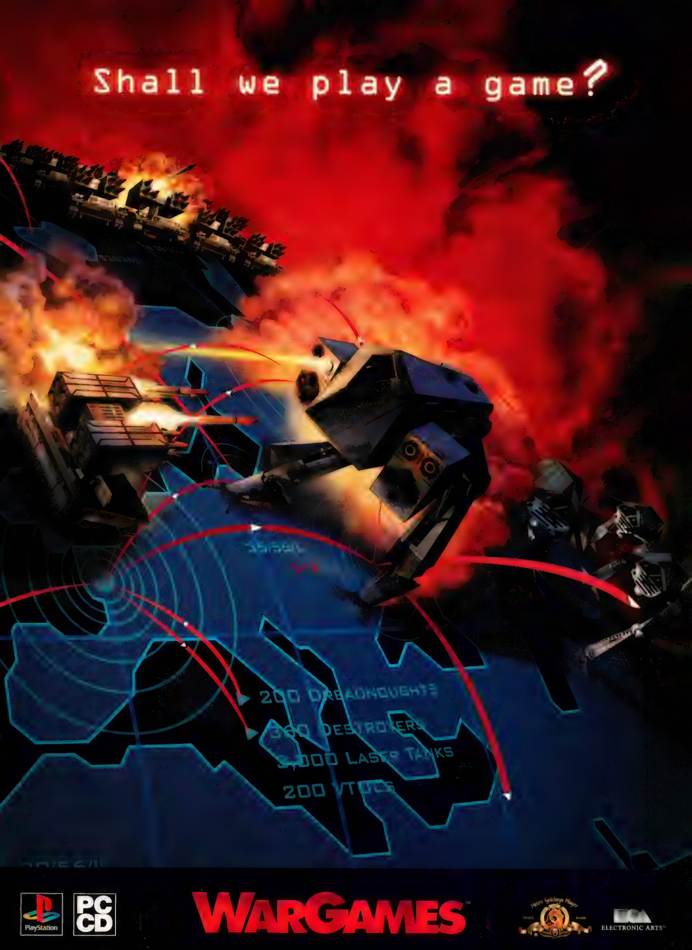
MATTHEW PIERCE

■ Publisher **Blue Byte** ■ Developer **In-house** ■ Price **£35** ■ Minimum System **P133, 16Mb RAM, Win95** ■ Recommended System **P166, 32Mb RAM, 3Dfx card** ■ Multi-Player **Internet, network, simultaneous** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx, D3D** ■ Web Address **http://www.bluebyte.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

On-line good, off-line bad. And the blokes have breasts – which is odd.

62%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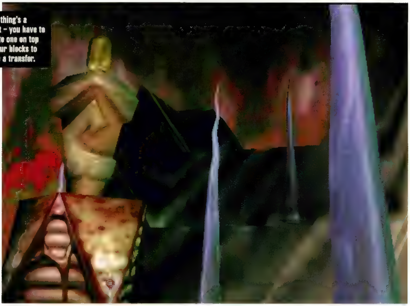
THE SENTINEL RETURNS

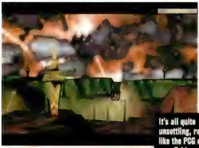
A game that features absolutely no guns, no blood, no deathmatch, but still manages to be great. Well, who'd have thought it?

TO compare *The Sentinel Returns* with, well, anything else, is something of a problem. Out there in Readerland, any unfamiliarity with the decade-old precursor of this whizz-bang update behooves me to try and describe something that is a very mad kind of brain soup.

Let's just say that, for something that defies classification, this is a puzzle game with a touch of the Gigers, Block 1-2-3 (aka 40-40) suffering from peyote induced heebie jeebies, a Lovecraftian British Bulldog set in a sinisterly dangerous playground. The titular Sentinel sits on high, turning constantly, surveying its abstract domain. If it catches sight of you, its gaze starts to drain your energy. Your only course of action is to work your way up to its level and 'absorb' it, and therein lies the hinge of the game. Blocks can be created to hop on top of, and absorbed to give you energy, but the one rule that counts demands that your actions can only transpire on a level lower – or equal – to you. It's a constant race against time, then, to elevate yourself to strategically important points and get high enough to nobble the Sentinel before he nobbles you. The creation of trees provides momentary cover, and the absorption of them gives much-needed energy



That thing's a robot – you have to create one on top of your blocks to make a transfer.



It's all quite unsettling, rather like the PCG office on a Friday afternoon. Yes.

Unique

And that's basically it. Although, there are some 650 levels of 'it'.

Much of this may sound very familiar to the gazillions of faithful acolytes who still worship the original and, indeed, much of it is. The core of what made *The Sentinel The Sentinel* has remained largely unchanged. Sure, a few wrinkles have been ironed out – it moves with fluidity and speed – but the difference between the two games is mainly what you'd expect the difference between a ten-year-old Commodore 64 game and a 1998 PC game to be. It looks gorgeous, but disturbingly so – organic, fleshy and Jules Verne-esque – and the music (created by John 'The Thing' Carpenter) is suitably eerie, featuring washes of eerie synths. The net result is a menacing, ominous atmosphere that suits the vague, abstract nature of the game perfectly.

> **"Ten years on, there's still nothing like it."**

But is it actually any good? Thankfully, yes. The simplicity of *The Sentinel Returns* hides great tactical subtlety and nail-biting tension. Sure, the first 50 levels may be a tad repetitive, but after that sentries, hyperspacing meanies and increasingly tricky terrain force a constant re-appraisal of strategy. Ten years on, there's still nothing quite like it. Weld the best that puzzle games can offer on to a hostile 3D environment and you're part way there. *The Sentinel Returns* is bizarre, addictive and one-of-a-kind. I urge you to try it. **JES BICKHAM**

Publisher **Psygnosis** ■ Developer **No Name Games** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **P133, 16Mb RAM** ■ Recommended **P166, 16Mb RAM, 3D card** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx** ■ Multi-Player **IPX, Internet, modem** ■ Web Address **http://www.psygnosis.com** ■ Release Date **July**

PC GAMER

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89%

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- ❖ *Two Immersive campaigns including over 30 missions and "Hidden Surprises"*
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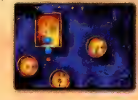
- ❖ *Real-time combat includes fog of war, aggressive wildlife, and real line of sight*
- ❖ *Full multi-player support via serial link, modem, LAN, or Internet*

Fields of Fire
WAR ALONG THE MOHAWK



Based during the French-Indian war in the 1700's, FIELDS OF FIRE: *War Along The Mohawk™* is a challenging, historical game where role-playing meets real-time strategy. Grow your character through the American conflicts, learn new skills and acquire wealth and power while managing real-time battles and looking after your base, resources, and friends.

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THE CLUB FOR TRULY SAD COMPUTER GAME NERDS

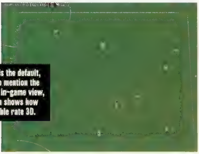
SENSIBLE SOCCER WORLD CUP 98

Rather sensibly, Sensible waited until EA's *World Cup 98* came out before releasing their own, typically idiosyncratic offering... doh!

JON Hare, erstwhile founder of the home computing phenomenon that is Sensible Software, has recently announced his intention to sell the company. He complains that it is no longer possible for small teams to create original games.

Isn't it ironic, don't you think, that although he was referring to the fate of his pet project *Sex, Drugs And Rock 'n' Roll* (four years in the making and no publisher interested), such a state of affairs suits *Sensible Soccer's* model completely? While the world and his wife's development teams are trying to create 'real' football on the PC, Hare and his dog have come up with yet another *Sensi*

Oh, sure, a nod to the visual revolution has resulted in a new graphics engine, a seemingly genuine 3D world, but one that you inevitably play in a from-the-airship, top-down view. But, when it comes down to it, it is still, courageously, the same old Amiga *Sensible Soccer* all over again



This is the default, not to mention the only, in-game view, which shows how Sensible rate 3D.

The 3D replays are noticeably slower than the top-down view, which would suggest that the engine is about as swift as Gazza.

Greying

> **"The old Amiga *Sensible Soccer* all over again."**

The addition of some rudimentary 3D modelling and motion capture are the major changes for this update of the veteran *Sensi*.

The control system has changed slightly. Forget *World Cup 98* or *ISS64's* pages of controls and remember this: button one tackles, passes, shoots, headers, bicycle kicks and saves, while button two tackles but without passing the ball on.

Hare has long championed the need for football simplicity, but you shouldn't assume that the new *Sensi* is easy to pick up. Essentially, you must learn timing: combining pinpoint accuracy with copious use of the sensitive aftertouch system to chip the ball over the midfield and curve it past the keeper.

While this system has its moments of euphoric genius – if only I could show you my sublime Roberto Carlos-style free kick – it is too simplistic. You can't control the formation of your team in-game, you can't even position players during throws or corners and just have to hope that the ball ends up at another player's feet. Naturally, the computer seems to always have someone waiting for it

Sensi's keepers are still frustrating, too. When playing against poor teams, the slightest bend on the ball is enough to upset their goalie. But take on tougher teams and the keepers seem unbeatable while your own shotstopper doesn't even scoop the ball up when it's five yards from his feet, thus gifting it to opposing goalhangers. You won't find the keepers dominating to this extent in, for example, EA's *World Cup 98*

Your first hour with *Sensi* is worrying. It fails to grab at all. But as you understand its machinations you're drawn in, and find yourself producing some wonderful football moments. Unfortunately, it can no longer rely on being supremely playable to beat EA. The latest version of *FIFA* is better than *Sensi* in every way.

STEVE OWEN

■ Publisher **GT Interactive** ■ Developer **Sensible Software** ■ Price **£30** ■ Minimum System **P100, 16Mb RAM, Win95** ■ Recommended System **P166** ■ Graphics Accelerator **Any Direct3D card** ■ Multi-Player **Two-player on one PC** ■ Web Address **http://www.gtgames.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

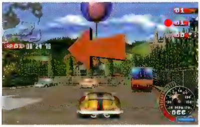
PC GAMER

It's fun, but post-*FIFA*, *Sensi* is simply the poor man's alternative.

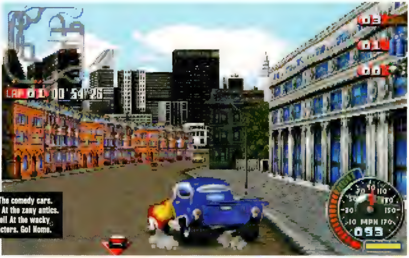
79%

WRECKIN' CREW

Re-arrange the following sentence: the, on, dashed, promise, rocks.



ORIGINALITY isn't always apparent in PC land. We all know that practically every game for the platform can be filed neatly away into a particular genre (be it driving, first-person shooter or whatever), and that each of these genres usually spawns at least one fantastically good game. It's when this happens that legions of wannabes clutch, white knuckled, to the coat-tails of this innovator, hoping that some of the magic will remain on their fingertips when they inevitably fall by the wayside.



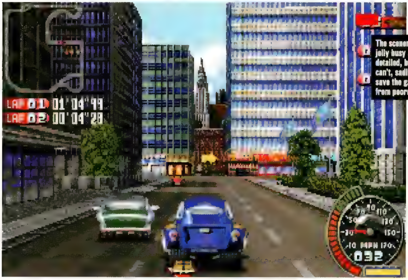
See! The comedy cars. Look! At the zany antics. Marvel! At the wacky characters. Go! Home.

Which brings us to *Wreckin' Crew*. It's a game borne of *Street Racer*. Which, in turn, was begat by Nintendo's original SNES *Mario Kart*. *Street Racer* wasn't a patch on *Mario Kart*. And *Wreckin' Crew*... Well, it tries hard.

Reckless

"Little or no room to improve technique."

Telstar's latest is a cartoon racer, a fact which must be obvious by now It features wacky characters (Kid Kranium and Sir Cass, anybody?), zany cars, power-ups and weapons. It's a dangerous place to be, and not only because today's PC gamers have far bigger – and inevitably 3D-accelerated – fish to fry. There are certain criteria demanded for a game such as this to succeed Most importantly, the handling and speed must be simple yet capable of further refinement – sorry to keep harping on about this, but *Mario Kart* (and, in particular, its 64-bit sibling) had this down to a tee, with hops and powerslides to delight the advanced player *Wreckin' Crew* features some basic requirements differing acceleration, speed, etc., for all the disparate characters but once you've adapted to the controls and the handling, there's little or no room to improve technique. Sadly, it's simply a case of remembering when and where to corner The power ups lack balance. Every car is equipped with side-firing guns and a special weapon, which more often than not underwhelms in its execution. The effects differ, but are generally too ineffectual to have a bearing upon the race; a giant top hat swirling into the air and spewing white rabbits onto the road does little to embarrassingly, and hilariously, spam the opposition. Yawn



The scenery is jolly busy and detailed, but can't, sadly, save the game from poorness.

On the plus side, the tracks are bright and well designed, with a multitude of secret warps and oodles of detail (despite all being completely flat, with only the odd ramp to enliven things); although this, predictably enough, isn't sufficient to address the problems so prevalent elsewhere

Wreckin' Crew is a cuckoo, a chameleon, a changeling in an already redundant crib. It takes an idea and obstinately refuses to improve on it. Foolishness.

JES BICKHAM

■ Publisher **Telstar Electronic Studios** ■ Developer **Quickdraw** ■ Price **£35** ■ Minimum System **P60, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95** ■ Recommended **P120, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95** ■ Graphics Accelerator **None** ■ Multi-player **Two-player split screen** ■ Web Address **http://www.telstar.co.uk** ■ Release Date **July**

PC GAMER

It could've been a lot of fun. We should've known it wouldn't be.

40%

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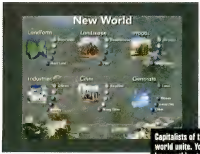
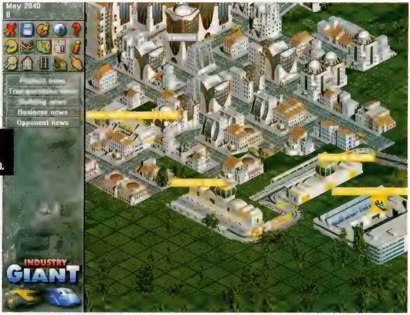
INDUSTRY GIANT

Be a Fat Cat and give the working class a damn good licking. Ahem.

Derailed



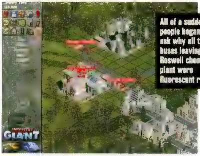
Capitalists of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but... er, £40.



WE didn't wear anoraks. We didn't know how many carriages the 3:17 to Stoke had. We didn't spend our Sundays renovating a rundown railway station. Yet, we still, in our thousands, sat round an old CGA monitor watching cyan and magenta trains carry passengers, mail, coal, or lumber from one place to the next, trying to build an empire and put other railroads out of business. That was the beauty of *Railroad Tycoon* – a game that lured us into caring most passionately about something we had always considered completely dull. From *Railroad Tycoon* came *Transport Tycoon* and from *Transport Tycoon*? Well.

Initially, you can't help but make comparisons with the Sid Meier classic. The similarities are there throughout, although it's far from a straight copy. In *Industry Giant*, you are the driving force behind a company and have to deal with all aspects of your chosen industry. Everything from production, to retail, to marketing is here and all done under the watchful eye of a board of directors, who are none too forgiving should you fail.

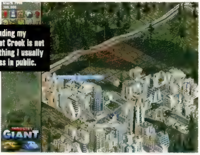
> "The lack of a multi-player mode is a glaring omission."



All of a sudden people began to ask why all the buses leaving the Roswell chemical plant were fluorescent red.

The maps are detailed isometric views that can be played in resolutions up to 1024x768. There are plenty of animations to keep you interested, but the colour feels a bit flat and washed out. It doesn't help that a chunk of the screen is taken up by a large, grey vertical column, which contains all the controls for making your decisions. It works smoothly enough and helps you to quickly find your way around the interface without any difficulty – always a big plus in real-time games – but said column takes up a criminal amount of space, which could have been much better utilised. The obvious replacement for some of this grey matter would have been a mini-map, enabling you to quickly jump from one area to another. Its absence makes your job all the harder.

There are a considerable number of ways of playing *Industry Giant*, from single scenarios through to carving out an entire dynasty, against a range of opponents exhibiting different levels of business acumen. The scenarios offer a short-term challenge and help you learn the game and hone your skills, but obviously the main appeal lies in the open play of the extended simulation. However, the lack of any form of multi-player option in either mode of play is a glaring omission. This oversight wouldn't have been such a problem if it wasn't for the poor AI. At first, you're grateful for your rivals' incompetence, as it gives you a chance to compete in what is apparently a very difficult game. But once you have mastered a few basic entrepreneurial skills, *Industry Giant* becomes a bit too formulaic and you long for the unpredictable challenge of a human opponent **JASON WESTON**



Expanding my Nugget Creek is not something I usually discuss in public.

■ Publisher **Interactive Magic** ■ Developer **Jo Wood Productions** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **P90, 16Mb RAM, x4 CD-ROM, Windows 95** ■ Recommended **As above** ■ Graphics Accelerator **None** ■ Multi-Player **None** ■ Web Address **http://www.imagicgames.co.uk** ■ Release Date **12th June**

PC GAMER

Giant in name only, this is a competent if flawed business simulation.

72%

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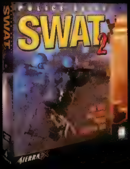
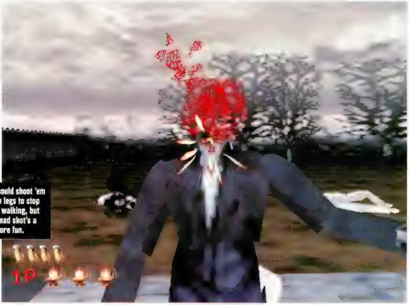


HOUSE OF THE DEAD

"Hello! Avon calling! Can I interest you in any-" *"Brains... brains... eat your brains..."* "Ah. I'll be wanting next door, then."

ANY good English graduate can tell you that the various ghouls and boggarts of gothic fiction represent our socially unacceptable yet beguilingly attractive dark sides. Vampires? Unbridled sexuality and magnetic personality. Werewolves? Unrestricted animal appetites. Frankenstein's monster? Playing God (or perhaps Jim Flynn). But zombies? They're only good for eating brains and being blown into small mucus-drenched gobbets of jittery flesh. I'm not quite sure what that says about the human condition, but stick 'em in a game and you're sure to have fun.



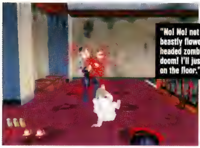
You could shoot 'em in the legs to stop them walking, but the head shot's a lot more fun.

House Of The Dead is the PC conversion of the supremely gory arcade on-railer. It features, conveniently, hordes of zombies to be re deceased, and not just the common or garden shambling type, either. You'll succumb, variously, to the charms of Winged Dog Beast Zombies, Leapy Evil Frog Zombies, Cheeky Little Chimp Zombies and Chainsaw Wielding Hillbilly Zombies, plus hordes more 'Plot', as always, is non-existent – consisting of some vague cobblers about a meddling scientist meddling with things that shouldn't be meddled with – which really doesn't matter a tittle here. It's all about dispatching the Undead in as bloody a way as possible. Which is always nice

"Mindless, frantic, wrist-cramping fun."

Putrefied

And that really is about it; blowing the maggots from mobile corpses in order to save the scientists that are trudging VERY SLOWLY around a decrepit mansion. And it's tremendous fun. Being able to shoot a hole straight through a zombie's guts, or shearing his face clean off and watching the eyeballs pop out, is undeniably entertaining It's mindless, frantic, wrist-cramping fun, but the kicker is that you'll see all of it within a morning including the secret areas – if you try. Other drawbacks are manifest: the graphics, while catering splendidly for the wide range of groaning corpses, bring out the worst in 3D acceleration, and with their thin, bland, smooth textures the surroundings are woefully undetailed. The only thing the game tests is your aim and reaction time, for which a lightgun would be preferable, although the mouse does a sterling enough job (indeed, grab a joypad or stick a friend to the keyboard and via the 'PC' mode two of you can dismember together). And things get a bit silly in the later levels, when the mood is shifted from effective gothic dankness to a more sci-fi orientated flavour, and cyborg zombies fire mechanised mantraps at you. As you'd expect



"No! No! not the beastly flower-headed zombie of doom! I'll just lie on the floor."

All of which conspires against *House Of The Dead's* favour. It's an enjoyable and refreshingly uncomplicated little game, but, quite simply, 35 quid is far too much for a few hours' worth of entertainment. If you must have zombies, go and rent Dawn Of The Dead instead, or play *Resident Evil* again.

JES BICKHAM

■ Publisher **Sega** ■ Developer **In-house** ■ Price **£35** ■ Minimum System **P133, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95** ■ Recommended **P166, 16Mb RAM, 3D card** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx, PowerVR** ■ Multi-Player **Two-player simultaneous** ■ Web Address **http://www.sega.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

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74%

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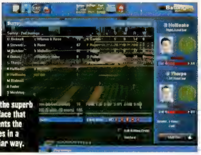
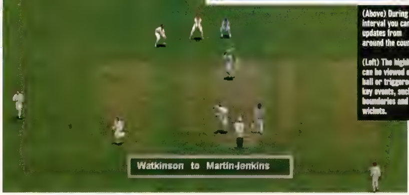
Cricket management finally makes its debut on the PC. Prepare to be hit for six.



Note the superb interface that presents the figures in a familiar way.



(Above) During each interval you can get updates from around the country.

(Left) The highlights can be viewed every ball or triggered by key events, such as boundaries and wickets.

THE world of sport is generally well represented on the PC. Okay, we are yet to be treated to a synchronised swimming real-time strategy game, with deathmatch levels, but you can't have everything. One sport has attracted much attention over the years, but has consistently failed to make the leap from lush green fields to our monitors without descending into farce. This is cricket, of which the two most recent offerings we have looked at in PC GAMER, *EA Cricket 97* and Audiogenic's *Shane Warne Cricket*, were particularly dismal. Neither captured the spirit of the game, both of them relying on an arcade style of play, where furious waggling of the joystick is the key to success, which is hardly comparable to lazy summer afternoons and the sound of leather on willow.

International Cricket Captain takes a whole new approach, focusing on the management aspects of the game. Now we're not talking Board of Selectors, with heated negotiations in the Long Room. Instead, the main task facing you is to assume the role of captain and take responsibility for the strategies employed on the field. You also control team selection, along with handling training, and make bids for overseas players to strengthen your squad. However, this is the weakest aspect of the game and lacks the depth that we have come to expect from the more mature football management genre. Where the game shines is in the authenticity of the stats produced and in its in-match controls.

Boundary

That's the trouble with authentic stats. You have to look at a list where Graham Hick is above Brian Lara.

The interface is wonderfully intuitive for a game of this type, and all the information you want is displayed when you need it, in a form that will be instantly recognisable to any fan of the sport. Make the right tactical decisions and you'll reap the rewards in a realistic fashion. Pound away with your tired pace men on the fourth day with a 60-over-old ball and prepare to be punished. Bring on a decent spinner in this situation and set your field accordingly and it pays dividends. It is probably for reasons like this that Wisden, the 'Godfathers' of cricket, saw fit to endorse *ICC*.

Your objective is to manage a county cricket side over a period of 20 seasons and achieve a rating for your performance, which is weighted according to the team, i.e. expectations aren't as high at Durham as they are at Middlesex. Type in Alec for your player name and you also get the job of captaining England for a season. All the fixtures and tournaments are included and you work through them chronologically, requiring frequent switches in tactics.

> **"The interface is wonderfully intuitive."**

There are some features which are sorely missed, such as the ability to tell a batsman to keep the strike. You are also unable to direct a bowler to bowl a specific length, just the line and how attacking you want him to be, but *ICC* is so far ahead of any other cricket game on the market that it seems churlish to complain.

JASON WESTON

■ Publisher **Empire** ■ Developer **In-house** ■ Price **£35** ■ Minimum System **P90, 16Mb RAM, Win95, x2 CD-ROM** (will run with no highlights on a 486DX/66) ■ Recommended **As above** ■ Graphics Accelerator **None** ■ Multi-Player **None** ■ Web Address **http://www.empire.co.uk** ■ Release Date **Out now**

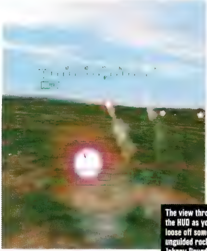
PC GAMER

Lacking in some areas, but by far the most realistic cricket sim yet.

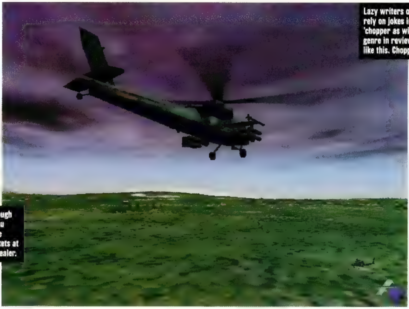
75%

TEAM APACHE

"Tea? My patch, he..." Oh, dear... I'll stop before it gets any worse.



The view through the HUD as you loose off some unguided rockets at Johnny Drugdealer.



Lazy writers often rely on jokes in the 'chopper as winkie' genre in reviews like this. Choppers.

Patchy

THE problem with most helicopter sims is... well, helicopters. The blighters are so tremendously difficult to fly (or rather, to fly effectively) that you can spend half the time crashing into the ground or swinging round in circles instead of actually shooting at things.

With *Team Apache*, Simis have perched firmly on the fence dividing TediousAccuracyland from ArcadeBlastingville. In the ongoing war against drug barons, you can fly your Apache AH64-A chopper any way you like: quick and fairly easy, with all the aids turned on and none of this mission planning nonsense; or deep and complex, with an apparently realistic flight model and military acronyms up to your eyeballs. You can also elect to command up to five other Apaches in your group via a familiar wingman control system.

There are three modes of play. In Instant Action, you're thrown into a chopper and expected to blast away at everything in sight, no questions asked. Next step up are 16 Combat Missions, for which you can choose a mission type such as Search and Destroy or Air to Air, time of day, difficulty, backup, weather conditions and so on. For both modes there are two operational areas, Columbia and Latvia, but the differences between them are negligible. The former has less mountains, the latter is a hell of a lot harder. A reasonable mission editor enables you to create your own challenges.

"Fine as far as it goes."

The main meat in *Team Apache* comes with the Campaign mode. If you like, you can oversee everything, from helicopter maintenance and loadout to managing aircrews and dealing with supplies. Newspapers arrive from time to time, providing something of a story-line, and your effectiveness in each mission dictates (to a limited extent) what happens next. Oh, and you have the most cowardly and whiny co-pilot/gunner in the history of the army.

Mindscape seem inordinately pleased about the so called breathtaking graphics in *Team Apache*. Hmm... perhaps they mean the cut-scenes. Yes, the in-game effects are pleasing enough in a seen-it-all-before way, but breathtaking? Nah. There's very little to see anyway, just miles and miles of gently rolling empty fields interspersed with the odd military vehicle. Sparse cities sit oddly in the middle of nowhere and provide a few extra buildings, and with a 3D card you can admire the way moving clouds cast shadows on the ground, but on the whole they're largely forgettable.

Team Apache is fine as far as it goes, but that's not really very far. It has a workmanlike quality to it; what's there works okay and provides an engaging game, but there's nothing here that really stands out or makes you want to keep on playing. By trying to please everyone, Simis have produced a rather bland and nondescript affair which sits somewhere between the hardcore *Jane's Longbow* sim and the arcade action of *Comanche 3*. **ED RICKETTS**

When chopper pilots have nothing to do, they hang around in groups looking for trouble.

■ Publisher **Mindscape** ■ Developer **Simis** ■ Price **£40** ■ Minimum System **P133, 16Mb, Win95, DirectX 5, x4 CD-ROM** ■ Recommended **P166, 32Mb** ■ Graphics Accelerator **3Dfx, Direct3D, MMX** ■ Multi-Player **Serial, modem, network, Internet** ■ Web Address **http://www.team-apache.com** ■ Release Date **Out now**

PC GAMER

Like real pilots, it's technically proficient but ultimately a bit dull.

76%

ENTER THE WORLD OF THE X FILES

THE X FILES™ GAME

Enter a world where every shadow conceals danger, and every case is shrouded in secrecy. As field agent Craig Willmore you'll accompany Mulder and Scully, exploring multiple paths and story branches on the way to solving this complex mystery. All the while staying one step ahead of the FBI.

But remember, the truth isn't out there any more – it's in here.

Out July on PC CDROM/MAC CDROM

FOX INTERACTIVE™

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BUGRIDERS: THE RACE OF KINGS

It's as good as it sounds. Which isn't good enough.

■ Publisher **GT** ■ Developer **In-house** ■ Price **£30**

Bugs and quality are not happy bedfellows. The evidence: Adam And The Ants' greatest 'hits'; the TV series, *Bugs*; any software with the word 'Windows' in its title; *Bugriders*.

LET us, just for a moment, consider the racing game genre. Have you had enough of chrome and steel, of whiskered polycarbon alloys and Wankel rotary engines? Methinks there be a niche in the market. And here it is, for those industrious fellows at N-Space have brought the life back into racing. And how! Mammoth insects battle it out for supremacy of the skies and for the noble aspirations of their riders. The king is dead, you see, and a new king is needed. And what manner of test is deemed fitting for the future ruler of our race? It's obvious, really. I don't know why we didn't think of it earlier. Riding huge beetles! Flying roaches the size of trams! How glorious! And valorous! And noble! And, erm, is that not a touch daft?

Peel back the lacklustre layers of *Bugriders* and you'll find, unsurprisingly, a game that is wholly unworthy of its price tag. *Bugriders* places so much emphasis on its 'novel' attributes that it fails to be either of the things that it tries so insipidly to become, namely a racing game or a high speed combat game. Your initial reaction will probably be to cackle, crone fashion, as you 'crop' your bug to glorious victory (hear the beast squeal!). But such amusement will rapidly give way to disappointment. There's very little else to it, and certainly not enough to keep the progressive gamer interested for long. True, there is a battle mode (and the obligatory time trial mode), but the outdated control system, menopausal graphics and the frustrating fact that the tracks' boundaries are known only to the computer, will soon wilt your enthusiasm. Granted, the titular bugs are robustly attractive, despite their comical, whip-wielding jockeys, but such insectoid beauty comes at a price – when your mount slows down, it has a tendency to fill the screen and block out much of the action around you. Gagh.

AL BICKHAM

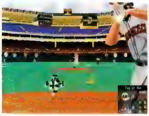
"Wholly unworthy of its price tag."

If riding ugly great beasts qualified you for the British throne, Matt Pierce would be our king.

PC GAMER

***The Race Of Kings*, the purchase of Fools. Next giant insect racing game, please.**

48%



HARDBALL 6

■ Publisher **EA** ■ Developer **Accolade** ■ Price **£40**

One of the keys to batting in baseball is to know when to leave a pitch alone. Unfortunately, there is a major problem with *Hardball 6* in that the pitchers are far too accurate, throwing a ridiculously high percentage of strikes. This means there are seldom any walks and you find yourself having to swing at practically every pitch. It's a fundamental flaw that cripples the accuracy of the game.

Try your best to ignore it and you find yourself confronted by more and more problems. The stats are illogically ordered, are incomplete and difficult to access. Play the game over a career and the stats become even more bizarre as time goes by. The graphics are designed to take advantage of DirectX, MMX, and various 3D accelerators, yet they are incredibly disappointing in most respects. And there are two stadiums missing, which Accolade claim will be made available for download from their Web site as soon as possible.

Yet I'm still playing *Hardball 6*. Not because I have to. Not because of a clause in my reviewer's contract which insists on playing all games, however bad, for a period of six months, or until psychiatric treatment is deemed necessary. No, I'm playing it because *Hardball 6* is greater than the sum of its parts. It's fun, like every game should be. Yes, it's inaccurate. Yes, it's frustrating. Yes, it's ugly. But it is fun baseball for light relief. The management options are not worth bothering with, as the game's faults are too hard to ignore in this mode, but for some arcade, bat swinging, home running, switch hitting, knuckle balling entertainment, *Hardball 6* does the biz.

JASON WESTON

74%

MIDAS Interactive Entertainment

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CYBERBALL release date 25th June

The New Style Arcade Pinball.

- Four Awesome Tables: Aircrash, Dooke, Shark Attack, Enlightenment.
- 8 Players & up to 16 balls.
- Superb Sounds & Spectacular Graphics.
- 2D or 3D view of Playing Field.
- 6 - 8 Paddles with Numerous Bumpers.
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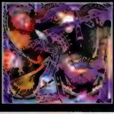
ARENA GAMES

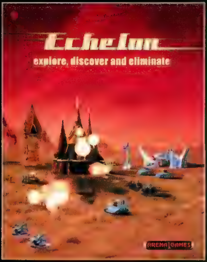


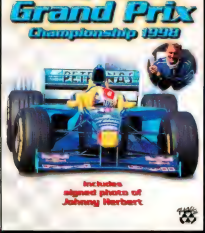
ECHELON release date 25th June

Action Filled Strategy Game played in an Alternative Science Fiction Environment.

- 3 Different Species: ARUTHAS, ERIINS & TRASKS.
- Superb Sound & Spectacular Graphics.
- 24 Buildings & 27 Vehicles
- 15 Exciting Missions.

ARENA GAMES


Echelon
explore, discover and eliminate
ARENA GAMES


Johnny Herbert's
Grand Prix
Championship 1998
includes
signed photo of
Johnny Herbert

JOHNNY HERBERT'S GRAND PRIX CHAMPIONSHIP 1998 release date 10th July

- Accurate Car Simulation Model developed in association with Grand Prix driver Johnny Herbert.
- Multiple Game Modes, 15 different tracks.
- Split Screen Option & Multiple Game Views.
- Accelerator Card Enhanced.
- Workshop Facility & User Control Over Realism.
- Editor included to customise teams & cars.
- Network play for up to 6 players.

3Dfx

This game is only endorsed by Johnny Herbert and is not approved by the FIA or any other federation or organisation.

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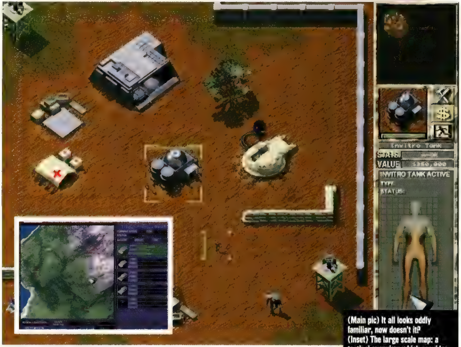
PROJECT AIROS

The latest *Dune II*-derived effort tries to run before it can walk.

■ Publisher **Infogrames** ■ Developer **Optic** ■ Price **£30**



(Main pic) It all looks oddly familiar, now doesn't it? (Inset) The large scale map: a tactical overview which provides all the current battlefield info.

ANYONE remember *Dune II*? Course you do, because even if you missed out on the colostomised grand-pappy of modern strategy sims, it lives on through *Red Alert*, *Starcraft*, *Total Annihilation* and every other offshoot the Westwood game has ever sired. The battlefield tactics blueprint, combining with production concerns and unit development, has barely changed since the beginning. Which is odd when you consider the ever-brawnier advances made by PC hardware.

> **"A lengthy and involved experience."**

So I, for one, would like to see more depth to these affairs. I'd like to have some say over what happens between conflicts, rather than just sit back and nod my way through a procession of cinematics. To their credit, Infogrames have at least made some attempt to cater for my desires with *Project Airos*

First thing's first: you'll need time to devote to this game. It is a lengthy and involved experience, which will have you not only commanding the battles yourself but fiddling with stocks and shares to make some dollars, redirecting said dollars into new and increasingly advanced research projects, and creating unit templates for your battlefield production sites to work from. None of which is new, of course. Countless games ask you to fund research projects in the race for bigger and better guns, so that's hardly original. And just what's so darn tootin' about finance management?

Project Airos' merit lies in the fact that it merges these elements in an involving and absorbing manner. Sadly, the graphics are fairly nuts-and-bolts, as is the sound. The combat system is modelled on, and sometimes inferior to, its contemporaries, and battlefield control is a little dated. Quibbles, yes, but important ones *Project Airos* would benefit from attention to such little details, as they place it the other side of the generation gap. This is the sort of thing that should've been done two years ago. As it stands, *Project Airos* is too little, too ugly and too late.

AL BICKHAM

PC GAMER

Dated foray onto the tactical battlefield with little to lift itself out of the trenches.

63%

TENDER LOVING CARE

■ Publisher **Funsoft** ■ Developer **Aftermath** ■ Price **£35**

"So, tell me about your muzza. Did her breasts scare you?" Freudian quips aside, *TLC* is, oddly enough, about this sort of thing. The form of this "interactive self-assessment package" (one could hardly call it a game) is simple enough. You, as a fly-on-the-wall observer, are led through a video-based story-line concerning a couple as they struggle to deal with their daughter's death The couple in question are assigned a live-in nurse by their psychoanalyst, played, incidentally, by John Hurt. Quite why, in the midst of personal tragedy, one would call on the services of a hard-bitten spacer infected with a violent, silicon-based alien parasite beggars understanding, but such is the warp and the woof of things. The crux of the game is that the program assesses you through your responses to the unfolding events. At periodic intervals, you are given short tests that ask you questions and culminate in observations on your relationship with the world around you. This is why you cannot class *Tender Loving Care* as a game; it's more of a short film that, through interaction, tries to provide an objective view of your life.

And how accurate is it? Well, I was surprised. To get any realistic feedback, you need to be honest, which is difficult as the questions do get amusingly personal. And despite a few things which didn't add up (Iron constitution? Me?!) I was generally satisfied with the results. No mind blowing self-revelations, though, just straightforward stuff. So if you're looking for a game, look elsewhere. If you're after a generally dull, softly pornographic thriller with no replay value that tells you stuff you probably know already, then cast your nets no further

AL BICKHAM

56%

TENDER LOVING CARE

VIPER
Alien Alert ! ...
HUD
PC CD ROM
ocean

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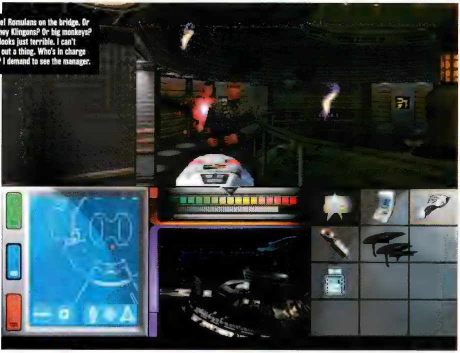
The cheeky young scallywag of time kicks away the walking stick of popularity from underneath the withered, gout-ridden greats of yesteryear.

By STEVE OWEN

STAR TREK: GENERATIONS

■ Publisher **PowerPlus** ■ Price **£30**



Aiiieee! Romulans on the bridge. Or are they Klingons? Or big monkeys? That looks just terrible. I can't make out a thing. Who's in charge here? I demand to see the manager.

JUST as you can package any old rubbish in a box with the Spice Girls plastered all over it, so many people, having seen the screenshots for *Star Trek Generations*, think that MicroProse have done a similar thing. But without Victoria's legs.

The thing is that these screenshots *do* the game justice. It really does look this bad. It looked hideous when it was released over a year ago. It looked terrible when it was previewed two and a half years ago. And yet someone in MicroProse not only gave the project the thumbs up, but continued to fund it as it inevitably ran late.

So it is, with a suspicious heart, that I thank their foresight. For all its dated ugliness, underneath *Star Trek: Generations* is a surprisingly involving game. Utilising an outdated metaphor, you can't judge a book by its cover. It's also a worthy lesson for certain games journalists – you can't judge a game from the back of the box

You are, I imagine, familiar with the film, otherwise I would argue that you won't be in the least bit interested in the game. It follows the plot very closely, with the baddy, the Malcolm McDowell character, destroying planets just so he can go back to a dimension not dissimilar to heaven, to receive whatever he desires. To stop him, you end up chasing through a number of carefully designed 3D levels, playing several of the Next Gen characters, sometimes in disguise. The puzzles are tough, and *Generations* is very much a thinking man's actioner.

> **"Underneath, it's a surprisingly involving game"**

But its faults are that – eyesore graphics and boring playing style aside – you absolutely have to love Gene Roddenberry's creation. If you don't think Star Trek's the best series ever, you'll ditch this within hours.

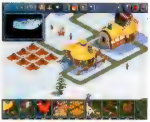
PC GAMER

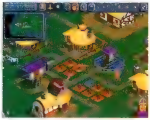
Uglier than a Klingon's wart, only a Trekkie could love this brain-stretching actioner.

77%

BEASTS & BUMPKINS

■ Publisher **EA Classics** ■ Price **£13**





Warcraft II proved that if there's one thing we love, it's the sound of our minions doing what they are told with a silly accent and choice phrase. This is exactly why *Beasts & Bumpkins* seems so much better than it probably is. It is a kind of medieval *SimCity* cum *Red Alert* cum *Theme Hospital*. Oh, yes, just like *Warcraft II*. So, inevitably, the accents are a wonderfully clichéd Cornish, littered with bizarre expressions for everyday events. Everyone's favourite must be "Fancy a bit of nookie?", warning that another bumpkin is on its way

The purpose, then, is to build up a lovely little Cornish village, complete with clotted cream and strawberries stall, and use certain buildings to train your bumpkins so that they become master builders (who are able to generate better buildings) or fighters

Ah, yes, the inevitable combat section. Naturally, as part of your mission briefing, building a town just isn't good enough. Instead you have to explore your surroundings and wipe out some of the eponymous beasts. These range from the simple opening level bees to the later level zombies. But the fighting seems a bit tacked on at the end. It's almost as if the game was designed to be a resource management simulation – an amusing one at that – and some producer took one look at it and said (perhaps in a Cornish accent) "Whaaaat, no fightin'?"

It is still raucously good fun, though, if a little tricky to keep track of everything at once, for it truly moves at a blistering pace. £13 is a much better price tag for this.

78%

FALLEN HAVEN

■ Publisher **Blue Byte Classics** ■ Price **£10**

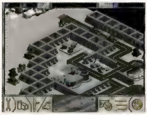
One of the hardest parts of doing reviews is not battling through the rubbish ones, but coming up with the amusing single word that is supposed to so eloquently describe the game in two cleverly dichotic ways at once.

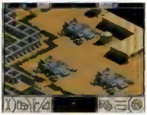
So, when *Fallen Haven* came in and everyone shouted, almost simultaneously, "SHAVEN", we all had to hope that somehow we could crowbar the word in.

Thankfully, *Fallen Haven* proved itself to be somewhat lacking in depth in places, leading Mark to declare that it was "as original as a short back and sides". Hoorah.

The game is, you see, trying to be ever so good – a combination of *Red Alert* and *Mission Force: Cyber Storm* but using a turn-based system. Now, that's no bad thing. Base building is included, technology research added. The thing is, a turn-based game must be strategically very challenging, otherwise why not just make it real-time?

Fallen Haven should have been real-time. The game is overly simple on almost every level. Despite a huge number of units, they all just move and fire. Fire and move.





Artillery is incredibly tough, but suffers in no direct way for its power. Balancing units is essential, but Micromeq, the developers, don't seem to have grasped this aspect.

What *Fallen Haven* – Shaven to its friends – does demonstrate, though, is that they had all the right ideas (apart from, arguably, the turn-based bit), but the implementation is a little bit suspect. It isn't, however, a bad game, just a little over-simplistic.

So, go on, have another stab at the genre, Micromeq.

66%

NEED FOR SPEED 2: SPECIAL EDITION

■ Publisher **EA Classics** ■ Price **£13**

The all-conquering Electronic Arts, the only software company able to compete with Japanese giants Nintendo, Sony and Sega (no surprise on the latter one), have been and gone and done it again.

No, no, no, no, no. I'm not suggesting that they have yet another superb game on their hands, but they do have yet another massive hit. If there is one argument to support branding, it's that the *Need For Speed* series is the best-selling driving game in the world.

And like the FIFA licences before the latest two, it just doesn't deserve to be. *NFS2:SE* (space saving, y'see) is driving by numbers: get the rights to some supremely fast cars, generate a thumping 'rawk' sound-track, create some suitably themed courses and present it alongside some high quality FMV.

DON'T under any circumstances make the cars handle appropriately, OR finely tune your graphics engine so that it drives particularly fast on an average PC. Just blast the MTV generation with an irresistibly slick front end and entertain them with those much-appreciated little touches – such as support for force feedback joysticks.

NFS2:SE isn't, by any means, a bad driving game. But *TOCA Touring Car* laughs at it, and *Gran Turismo* on the PlayStation shows them exactly how such an arcade racer should be.

It's ironic that, considering the six months it took for this to move onto budget, it was virtually there already. Back before Christmas, *NFS2:SE* was sold to the world for just £20.

64%

AIR WARRIOR 2

■ Publisher **Blue Byte Classics** ■ Price **£10**

Why do we have to excuse horrible graphics, just because they belong to a popular on-line game? *Warbirds*, *Air Attack* on Wireplay, Virgin's *Subspace*, and, of course, the slightly more famous *Air Warrior 2*, a game played by thousands of flight sim obsessives around the world.

The game, you see, unlike the more typical flight simulators from the likes of DID and Novalogic, supports literally hundreds of aeroplanes in the same sky, either flying co-operatively or, more typically, dogfighting like there was never a more noble pursuit.

Air Warrior, in one guise or another, has been going for about six years. The third version has just been released. What this means is that, unless you have experience of the Second World War or the Korean conflict (and our readership surveys suggest you haven't), you are going to be shot down by 199 other pilots within seconds. Like walking into your first multi-player game of *Quake* with an axe, you are going to have more than one rocket up your rear.

To combat that wet-behind-the-ears feeling, *Air Warrior 2* comes with over 100 single-player missions covering World Wars I and II and Korea. While this is an admirable collection of off-line sorties, the experience is less commendable considering the hideously flat, featureless landscapes.

Despite the almost anal avionics, the bubble has burst for everyone except, it seems, iMagic boss 'Wild Bill' Stealey and his chums, who remember what it was like to fly sims on the ZX81 and C64, and isn't *Air Warrior 2* lovely, and pass me the haemorrhoid cream and my copy of Majesty magazine...

58%

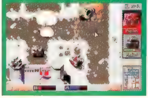
AND THE REST...

For those that have already had too much football – and far too many football games – there is always that hard to make exciting sport of cricket. Fans of this sedate pastime are hard done by, though, because EA Classic's **Cricket 97 ([illegible]%)**, £13, is, naturally, a terrible waste of a CD. Programmed by the same company that did *Krush Kill 'n' Destroy*, they should definitely stick to real-time strategy games.

***Albion* (61%)**, £10 from Blue Byte Classics, suffers, as much as anything else, from some dodgy translations from the native German. It's a role-playing game in the style of *Zelda*. Or *Ultima*.

Or *Doom*. Well, it all depends on what point of view you are being offered, as *Albion* inexplicably jumps between third-person, isometric and top-down as your character performs different actions. It was unbelievably dated when it was released and looks decidedly decrepit today.

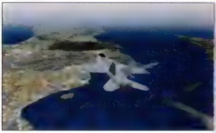
Finally, GT's Replay label is responsible for another look at the Bitmap Brothers' comeback **Z (69%)** for £10. The re-release is bundled with the Z expansion disc that provides a load more clever but generally unsatisfying levels. Some four years in development, the once-great Bitmap Brothers chose to create a real-time strategy game, but without any base building. Instead, it's all already there, and you just try to capture your enemy's buildings. Sure, it *is* fun. Just not for very long. Zzzzzz...



Years of
Total
Exactly what

Fact: A woman's

Carrier Strike
Fighter iF/A-18E



Interactive Magic, Gingers Court,

iF/A-18E Carrier Strike Fighter, TALON, DEMON ar
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dedicated training and strict discipline.
concentration and perfect balance.
you would expect of a U.S. Navy fighter pilot.

body is better equipped to withstand the pressures of G-Force.

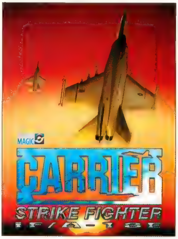
In training, every sinew in your body has been stretched to breaking-point, every move meticulously choreographed to ensure you are in the right place at the right time. Every joint in your body has been pounded hour after hour attempting a landing of perfect balance and precision.

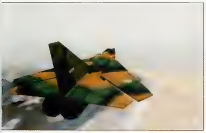
But nothing prepares you for the sheer, gut-wrenching, thrill of being 'Cat-Shot' skyward, throttle fully open, from the deck of an aircraft carrier, or the tension of coming into land in stormy weather, as with nerves of steel and immaculate precision you hook up to the wire on deck.

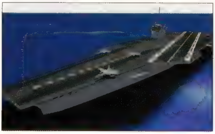
Built around the high-tech avionics, radar and stealth technologies of the newest tool in the U.S. naval aviation arsenal, gameplay features include:

- The famous DEMON™ terrain engine, combining satellite imagery with Digital Elevation Models based on real-world data, create amazingly life-like, non-repeating terrain.
- Fully dynamic campaign generation; the TALON™ Campaign System ensures every mission will be unique and unpredictable with unrivalled depth and realism.
- Fully functional, point-and-click Active Cockpit with state-of-the-art avionics.
- Fly as Mission Commander or opt for the more advanced Squadron Commander and make tactical planning decisions.
- Single player, modem and network support - fly solo missions or declare war on your friends!

The rehearsals are over. It's time to perform.







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LucasArts' Director of Development is on a mission – to combine the company's legendary creativity with George Lucas' latest foray into the Star Wars universe. PC GAMER speaks to the man at the helm...

STEVE DAUTERMAN

BY JAMES FLYNN

They've been idolised, copied, revered, and envied, but just how have LucasArts kept themselves at the top throughout the years?
It's the people. That may sound like an over-simplification, but when it comes down to it we have the best people possible working together to create something that's really special and unique in the development world. Everybody here is totally committed to the company and what it stands for that is originality, style and content. We try to combine these attributes to create games that we are proud of and hope gamers enjoy playing as much as we do. The success of every company ultimately comes down to the people who work there, but every decision we make around here involves people and their creativity as opposed to money.

So you've never rushed a game out just to make a quick buck then?
[Pause for thought] No. No. It's been tempting sometimes but that's just not the way we work. We know we have a wonderful image at LucasArts and are honoured to have that, and it's just not worth risking that for the sake of one short-term gain on a bad game. Also, we're in that enviable position of not being a public company, so there's no pressure on us to rush things out to hit certain financial quarters and please the shareholders.

***Indiana Jones, Monkey Island, Day Of The Tentacle, Sam & Max* (to name but a few) all set new standards in PC adventure gaming, but has their success surprised even you?**
Our adventure games' popularity dates back to the days where we were localising versions for various European countries. It seems that the European audience really enjoys the story aspect of games as well as the action and shoot 'em-up elements. The US market is much more accustomed to the action shoot 'em-up, but the adventure game has always been one of those traditions we want to continue. Having said that, we don't ever want to do ten adventure games in a year. At LucasArts we look at the *Grim Fandangos* and *Monkey Islands* as 'big event' games to set new standards technically and creatively. Historically we've always liked to build a story into our games instead of just offering what you read in the readme.txt file and I think this is the answer.

Does it surprise you that even after 15 years no company has managed to get close to LucasArts' adventure games?
Early on, Sierra's *King's Quest* series was a big competitor, but they probably did too many adventures and eventually diluted the fact that they actually had some good games back then. These days, I think we may scare people off a little because we are kings of the adventure game, but there is probably a more obvious reason - they are very costly to do well.

If you think about it, adventures take a mass of artwork, lots of animation and they are very difficult to do in terms of coming up with strong puzzles to fill the player's time. After that you have to integrate them all with a strong story. We have some brilliant people like Tim Schafer who did *Grim Fandango* [and *Full Throttle*], who can create some incredible dialogue which adds a sense of humour to our games - an element I think a lot of people appreciate.

***Grim Fandango* will certainly take the genre forward. Can you put a figure on its development costs?**
Ball-park, it's going to cost over a million and a half dollars to do. Games have long development cycles these days *Grim* has been in development a little over two years now and has a few more months to go yet. After that, you need to sell big worldwide numbers to make those sums stack up. I think we'll do fine with *Grim* sales-wise, but if it wasn't for the European audience and the fact we know they love these games, it would be a much harder business decision to make. It's not just the US audience!

So you continue to own the adventure game. But what about LucasArts and that old PC favourite, the strategy game?
Well, it's a genre we've been making attempts at. I think that *Afterlife* was one of our noble attempts to do something different and that's one of those chances we took with a strange title. Some people enjoyed it and some didn't, but that doesn't really offend us - we want people to have different reactions to games, and we've recently seen a similar story with *Star Wars: Supremacy*. We wanted to do a gamer's strategy

GAMEOGRAPHY

LucasMagic

■ LucasArts' development history stretches back to 1982 and PHM Pegasus. Years later the company's classic phase begins as first *Maniac Mansion's* (1987) SCUMM engine revolutionises script generation before *Loom* (1990) and *The Secret Of Monkey Island* (1990) establish LucasArts as undisputed adventure game masters. *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* (1992) is still a favourite today, but the 1993/1994 heyday spawns *X-Wing, Day Of The Tentacle, Sam & Max, TIE Fighter, Dark Forces* and *Full Throttle. The Dig, Rebel Assault II* and *Afterlife* (1995-1996) mark a creative low before *Jedi Knight* (1997) comes along. *Grim Fandango* is next up.

What would sir fancy today?

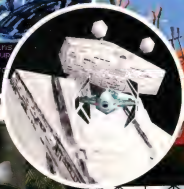
LucasArts cater for every taste with their superb catalogue of games.

eeps up the law and maintains
ats the donuts and roughs–up
t in my new coat!
down now and I won't have t

The *Monkey Island* trio of games is LucasArts' most successful adventure brand.

DUNK THE BEAST

Sub-games in LucasArts adventures are what the competition has yet to beat. This is *Sam & Max*.



Grim Fandango – $1.5 million and looking worth every cent.

The Indy and Star Wars games emphasise the close links within the Lucas empire. Expect more next year, including *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine* (right).

"There are some classic elements in the new Star Wars films that'll make great action games, great adventure-style games and great strategy games."

[redacted]

game and some people were put off because it wasn't as pretty as some games and didn't have all the action of Star Wars they expected. With *Force Commander* we're obviously trying to get into real-time strategy in a big way. We're going to do it, we're going to do it right and we obviously won't release it before it's ready to come out.

The 'Cult of Bill' which exists throughout Microsoft is often mentioned when talking about the company. Does George Lucas' influence pervade LucasArts to a similar degree?
[Laughs] Most of the people in our company are in their twenties and early thirties, and Star Wars 'happened' during their formative years. I was 12 years old when I first saw it and it's one of those experiences you just don't forget. The thought of working at LucasArts (or Lucasfilm, which was where I started) was a dream come true and still is for many people. We like to bring very talented people in and while I wouldn't qualify it as the 'Cult of George', he does embody something that people really respect. That quality and vision – all the things that are reflected in his work, we try to reflect in our own.

With the release of Star Wars Episode I next year, Lucasfilm will have their biggest year ever. How are you and LucasArts approaching the cinematic event of the decade?
Compared to a lot of companies who have worked with film licences, we are in a very enviable position - being so close to the company making the films for years gives us amazing opportunities. A lot of our strategy over the past couple of years has been geared towards these new films, particularly in the case of *Force Commander* and *Jedi Knight*. We developed a long-term strategy four or five years before the films were due to come out just because we knew they were in development. Our goal was to get into as many different genres and try as many different games as possible, so we were prepared to do things for the new films in a similar style and not have to worry about the basics and any teething problems. We've known about the scripts and known about the film for over a year now and we've had a couple of games related to the new films in production for over a year already...

Tell us all.
Without divulging too much, these are Star Wars in a lot of ways (and a lot of the stuff we've done in the past will apply) but there will be... differences of a sort! I don't want to say too much right now. Let's say there are some obvious places in the new films to make great games and when we look at it we go "*Man*, this is just like everything was historically" - what we now refer to as classic Star Wars - and a lot of those classic elements are there to make great action games, great adventure-style games and great strategy games. Like Star Wars, the new film is a character-based movie rather than just some big action piece like a lot of blockbuster films these days. Because of that we can create in-depth stories and take our aims in a lot of different directions. Having been so close to it for so long we've been able to have stuff in development long before people usually get any information when dealing with a movie licence.

Your *X-Wing* series is probably what LucasArts are still best known for. While it was an amazing game, the latest incarnation, *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter*, did have its problems. If a new addition to the series was amongst the next wave of Star Wars games, what would you do to keep the spirit of that but make it accessible to everyone again?
This past year has been a learning experience when it comes to Internet gaming, and we have to face facts that it's not going to get much better until the Internet changes or we get cable modems or other improvements. With hindsight, I think *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter* was a game that accomplished what we set out to do. It is true that some people were disappointed with the single-player aspect of the game, but that was something we addressed with *Balance Of Power* later on.

Generally, though, for these games (and by that I mean that kind of series and those kind of flight sim-ish experiences) to evolve we need to break free of just battling in space. Today we have the kind of technology where we can fly from one planet to another and actually go into the atmosphere and explore new realms – those are the kind of things we're looking at. Also we'll definitely be expanding multiple mission goals within an easy to-grasp structure.

Basically, though, we like to keep the message of our games focussed - in fact, I believe you should keep the aims of *any* game pretty simple and focussed - having too many elements competing for attention just confuses gamers.

George Lucas' films have been copied left, right and centre. Does it depress you when you see so many copied game formulas churned out by other companies?
Yeah, it is depressing. I think the industry is taking fewer and fewer risks. As a business man, I understand that making multi-million dollar calls is hard. If you're talking about spending anywhere from 1.5 to 5 million dollars on a title, you want to have a sure thing when you make that investment! Because of that there isn't a whole lot of innovation and people wonder why this particular title isn't making money. But they should realise that it's because there are five other titles just like theirs! People are tired of that. Every year there's one or two breakthrough titles and what sets them apart is that they are innovative and different. We think *Grim Fandango* is one of those games. It is in the style of our traditional adventure games, but since we've gone for a full 3D perspective this should draw some of the attention away from the 3D shooter and action adventure games that have dominated this year. I hope people are yearning for something different after playing their tenth first-person shooter or action game anyway! Times have definitely changed. I think we used to just beat people on quality alone, but today you have to have the timing and the hype and the marketing presence and the retail presence. All those are dependent on hitting release dates, but I think the successful teams have wised up to this fact as well and are much more devoted to this aim – it's good for everyone to work to real dates.

We've seen more Star Wars titles than new concepts recently - what are your plans for more original games?
In anticipation of the new films a lot of our resources have been dedicated a little more to Star Wars than they have in the past. We do look at the new movies as somewhat original because it's not your same old Star Wars, but we do have groups working internally on some truly original games. Our long-term plan is probably to return to a balance of about 50% original games and 50% Star Wars licensed games.

So then, will there be a game coming out to coincide with the release of the new films next May?
Oh, we plan to have a couple of them...!

NEXT MONTH

Either snooker-star Jimmy White or Id Software's Tim Willits will clasp the PC GAMER microphone-of-truth between their teeth.

English cricket. Could

Keep track of the performance of your bowlers - are they taking those vital wickets or are they getting smashed all over the ground?

Customise your field placing. What's your strategy - taking quick wickets or keeping the scoring rate down?

Off to a flyer but suddenly the runs dried up? - take a look at this graph to view how batsmen have scored in relation to the number of balls faced

ACTUAL SCREEN SHOTS

Ever wondered what it feels like to manage a Championship County cricket team? Think you could handle the pressure of a tour to the West Indies? **International Cricket Captain** from Empire Sport gives you the opportunity to prove it in the most comprehensive Cricket management simulation ever available for the PC. With real match data including County championship teams, grounds and players, you control every element of cricket strategy, both on and off the pitch. Participating in every first class and one-day County competition, you can even watch the action ball-by-ball as the drama unfolds in stunning real time animation. Endorsed by Wisden, the ultimate authority in cricketing reference, and with commentary from BBC's Jonathan Agnew, this is the definitive cricket management sim.

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you manage any better?

PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK EAGAR

How do you measure up as a Captain? Are you leading your side to glory or are you languishing at the foot of the table? Here's where you'll find out

Leg glances, square cuts, reverse sweeps, drives, pulls and hook shots - this will show you the batsman's weak shots as well as his favourites.

Check out your players' stats - are they performing to the best abilities? If not, maybe it's time to bring in some fresh faces

INTERNATIONAL
Cricket Captain
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
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THE PREMIER CRICKET MANAGEMENT GAME

PC GAMER

Lie down and let our love soothe your gaming migraine.

GUIDELINES

TIPS GUIDE

In the midst of the arcane practices that resulted in the new-look PC GAMER, we found the time to introduce a simple line-numbering system to Guidelines; now, you need never get lost again. So do please welcome its inception along with our *Starship Titanic* solution, cracked with a little help from Mr Chris Buxton, and Mark's continuation of last month's *Starcraft* tips. Enough, then, to prepare you for next month's *Unreal* walkthrough... Until then, then.

JES BICKHAM

COMPLETE LEVEL GUIDE

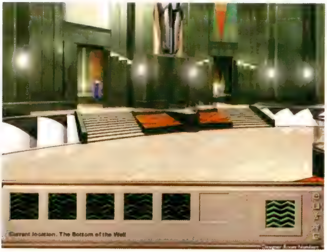
STARSHIP TITANIC

ACQUIRING A CABIN

Turn around from where you begin and put the Titanic CD in the CD player. Prepare for the ship to crash into your house. Meet Fenable and follow his instructions. Take the photograph on the mantelpiece and join him on board. He'll drop you off in the Embarkation Lobby. Ring the desk bell and it'll change into Marsinta, the DeskBot. Ignore her rudeness and accept the 3rd class cabin she offers. Which, unfortunately, is rubbish.

2ND CLASS CITIZEN

When you enter your room, the loudspeaker blares that you may have won a free ticket upgrade, and tells you to watch your telly to find out. The room is so cramped, though, that you'l need to rearrange things to succeed. First, press the third button down on your Personal Electronic Thing (PET). Then highlight the furniture in this order. Open Personal Maintenance Hub; Executive Horizontal Surface; Horizontally Mobile Storage Compartment; Fully Recumbent Relaxation Device; Inflate Fully Recumbent Relaxation Device. Now lie on the bed and click on the screen. Use the PET to select the television switch and change to Channel 3. Leave the room. Find and activate the nearby Succ-U-Bus, and get the in flight magazine it has for you. Give it to Marsinta in the Embarkation Lobby



1ST CLASS HONOURS

Marsinta is the key to the final upgrade – she has to provide it. You'll have to change her personality first, though. Go to the Top of the Well and pass the elevators until you come to the two rooms on the other end. One of these is the Sculpture Chamber You'll notice that each sculpture resembles a Bot and has two or three levers or buttons. The latter are controls and directly refer to the three gauges on the left side of your screen when you engage a Bot in conversation. The top one is Personality, the second is Memory, and the third is Motion. Resetting the levers on this sculpture does the trick. Marsinta's respective sculpture has the Call Bell attached to it Depress both levers Now return to the Embarkation Lobby, and ask Marsinta about getting an upgrade She'll be only too happy to oblige

THE EYES HAVE IT, PART 1

The central problem aboard the spaceship is the dismemberment of its figurehead, Titania. Assembling her parts isn't going to be easy. The simplest of these has already been signposted on one of the TV channels, which you may have already seen: it's a camera looking up at a room chevron from a strange angle If you click on the Designer Room Numbers icon of your PET, you'll be able to recreate the chevron you see on the screen Once you've done that, click on

the service here is terrible
You help me ... then I'll talk to you, is that a deal?
It's a deal
Good. Have a good butchers at [illegible] list and see what you can do

What are those things on your ears?
Oh dear another of those penetrating questions. I'm sure if you wait the answer will come to me. Umm ... [illegible] no apparently not

GAMES MASTER

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GAMESMASTER ISSUE 71 ON SALE WEDNESDAY 15TH JULY

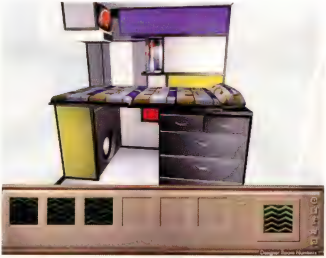
the finished chevron and go to the relevant 1st class state room The upper right lamp conceals one of Titania's eyes Move up the stairs towards the bed Turn around and click on the right corridor lamp Instead of giving forth a slightly hollow sound, you'll hear something rattling inside the bulb Switch your PET over to the first icon and click to summon Krage, the BellBot. Ask him to Get The Broken Light. He'll notice the eye in there and bring it to you

THE EYES HAVE IT, PART 2

Use elevator 1, 2 or 3 to take you to the Bottom of the Well Walk out and grab the discarded LiftBot's head on the floor Return to your cabin and check the television Note the room displayed on the screen for Channel 5. Head to the elevators. One of them, probably 4, isn't working. Choose the next elevator in line to take you to the floor indicated by the room number. You can enter the broken elevator on that floor. The LiftBot inside will not speak with you because Titania's right eye has been swapped for its head Remove the eye and place it in your inventory, and place Nobby's head back on the LiftBot's shoulders

AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY

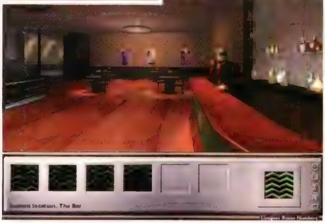
There's an Observation Post accessible from one end of the Top of the Well. Turn around when you reach it, and you'll see a reflective glass door. Click on it to travel down a flight of narrow stairs. Click on a second glass door to spiral down into Titania's Chamber. There are three rooms off this chamber for Scraliontis, Leovinus and Brobostigon. From the computer terminal near Titania's Chamber, you can read all the e-mails detailing how the disaster occurred Leovinus' room has a computer terminal which requires a password To read his e-mails, type Other. To read Scraliontis', type This; to read Brobostigon's, type That. Do be aware, though, that in any given game, these passwords can be swapped around. And what do you find? Ah, intriguing



Could you tell me where the toilet is?

OLFACTORY CENTRE SEARCH

While in Leovinus' room, be sure to open the wall safe covered with warnings. Ignore them. Behind the doors lies a control box. Two fuses, green and blue, are missing. They are vital to completing your mission



Down please and make it snappy

Come on then

Sorry Sir, not as nimble as I used to be.

Return to the Top of the Well, then go to the Parrot Room – it's across the hall from the Embarkation Lobby. Get the extra perch in the bags, then grab the parrot and leave the room. The obnoxious bird will escape, leaving you with a feather Take the Service Elevator (available behind an unmarked door in the Embarkation Lobby) down to the Bilge Room. The Mother Succ-U-Bus is here, and not feeling well. Activate it, place the feather in her tray then press Send. The feather will cause it to "cough up" an obstructing object – Brobostigon's corpse. He's got Titania's Olfactory Centre and the blue fuse. Grab 'em

PUREED STARLINGS AND PELLERATORS

Take the Pellerator to the bar On the top liquor shelf, towards the right, is another piece of Titania, but you can't get it. Fortillian, the BarBot, can't get it for you either because he's stuck in a loop. He needs to finish making a bizarre drink generated through database corruption; you'll have to get the ingredients for him so he can mix it. Click on Fortillian and ask for a drink. He'll provide an empty glass, which you'll need. To get the crushed television, summon the BellBot in the Parrot Room. Ask him to Throw The Television Down The Well. Take an elevator to the Bottom of the Well and gather the results. To get the Pureed Starlings, go to the fuse box in Leovinus'

FOUL PLAY

FORSAKEN

Until Descent 3 comes along, this'll satisfy our local spinny desires quite nicely thanks. During the game, hit the Esc key to get to the 'Esc' menu. Type 'bubbles'. Type 'iamzeus' to toggle God mode. And if you're really lazy and want to skip to the next level, type 'thefullmonty' to give you a level select.

OUTWARS

Enhance your jetpacking pleasure with these codes.

medieval – Invincibility

keymaster – Unlimited jet pack fuel

dirtyharry – Unlimited ammo

buzz – Glider suit

framerate – Frame rate counter

phantom – Spy on creatures using the F10 and F11 keys

missmrs – Change your player character's gender

gohome – Reset to the start position

sneakers – Sneaker mode

thrasher – Thrasher mode. Shows all your enemies on radar

timewarp – Mission timer on/off

weaponcam – Weapon-optic display follows your fired rounds, like the cameras in smart bombs.

singlemsg – Singleline message

bigears – "Planetside Sounds" (wha?)

derek1 – Seems to work but no visible results

warpme – JumpXXX. Jumps to the level inserted for XXX. In other words, "jumpoasis" jumps to the Oasis level. Known levels that work are: Oasis, Alkali, Ragnarok, Juggernaut and Dead.

HMV

thechallenge continues...

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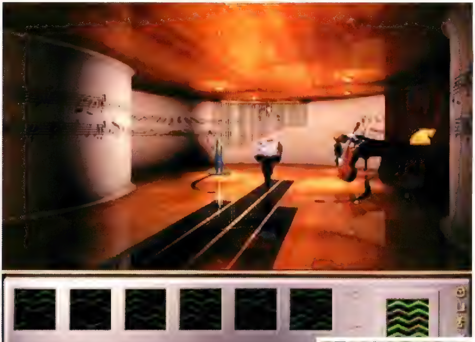
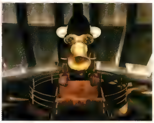
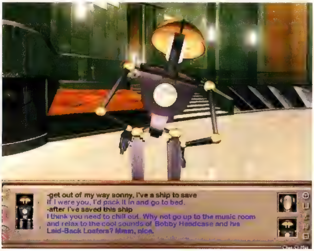


Current location: The Music Room



room. Place the blue fuse in place, then turn the blue and yellow knobs far to the right. Remove the yellow fuse. Take the **200** Pellerator to the Promenade Deck. Turn left, turn on the fan, then click the speed to fast. Voilà! Pureed Starlings. Before leaving the area, be sure you use the perch to repeatedly press the button on the hammer dispenser. Grab the hammer. Return to the Top of the Well, then take an elevator to any third-class floor (28th will do **210** nicely). Approach the restaurant (the unmarked door with the menu displayed to the right of it), and click the switch to get a greasy chicken. Place the chicken in the top row, second column from the left, and drag the beer glass under it. Pureed Starlings will slide out of the unit and into the glass. While there, be sure to enter the small **220** room at the end of the corridor. Turn partially towards the door until you can see the long stick in the wall. Use the hammer that you got on the Promenade Deck to smash the glass and grab the long stick. Return to the Top of the Well. To get the lemon, take the Pellerator to the Arboretum. Drag the long stick across a lemon tree, to knock **230** loose a lemon and put it in your inventory. To mix the drink, head back to the bar via the Pellerator. Give the lemon to the BarBot, then the crushed television, then the Pureed Starlings. When Fortillian asks what the last is, tell him Pureed Starlings. Finally, tell him to Get The Vodka. He'll mix up the drink using himself as the shaker. **240** Unfortunately, this will also short circuit the BarBot; however, if you ask him to Get The Vision Centre, he'll hand it over.



-get out of my way sonny, I've a ship to save
If I were you, I'd pack it in and go to bed.
-after I've saved this ship
I think you need to chill out. Why not go up to the music room and relax to the cool sounds of Bobby Headcase and his Laid-Back Loafers? Mmm, nice.

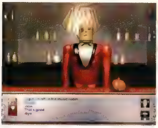
SHE NOSE YOU NOSE, YOU NOSE

Take the Pellerator to the Arboretum. On the opposite side of the Arboretum is another **250** Pellerator-like enclosure which actually functions as a supplies closet. Open it and grab the hose. Head back to the Parrot Room and over to the broken light. Use one end of the hose on the light, and the other end on the Succ U Bus. Instruct it to blow. The nose will rise out of the fixture. Grab it

260

A WORD IN YOUR SHELL-LIKE, PART 1

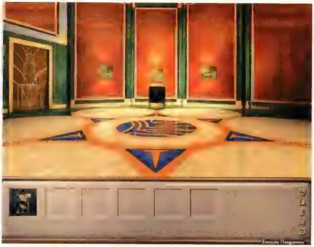
Use the Pellerator to visit the Music



Room. The Control Panel settings for this puzzle are actually on the back of the Starship Titanic box, oddly enough. Duplicate and hit the red button on the Control Panel to make sure it sounds right, then turn around and head over to the cylinder machine. The 'horn' there is actually one of Titania's ears. Take it. A new horn will grow immediately to replace it.

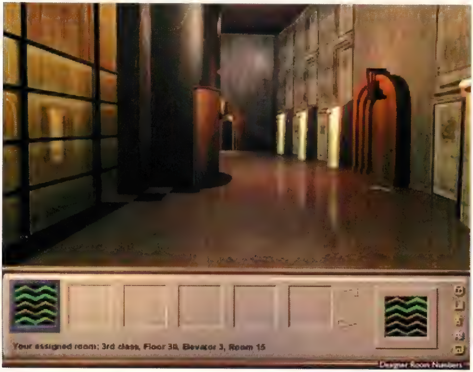
AUDITORY CENTRE ADVENTURE

Press Record on the cylinder machine (that's the circle icon). Go back to the Panel and play the music through. Return to the phonograph and stop the recording by pressing the square icon. To make sure you recorded it correctly, press the triangle icon, then hit the square icon twice to eject. Grab the cylinder and take the Pellerator to the 1st class restaurant. (It's the top image towards the right.) Exit the Pellerator, click on the double doors, and walk to the end of the room where the Maître'D Bot lies scattered in several pieces. Grab his severed right arm, which holds Titania's Auditory Centre and won't let go. He'll get nasty but he doesn't have any arms. Keep poking him in the rear with your mouse pointer until he gives up. Now he'll allow you to be seated behind him at the table with Scraliontis who is, unfortunately, dead. In front of him is the Maître'D Bot's left arm. Take it. Click on Scraliontis and you'll also discover the green fuse to Leovinus' Control Panel. Don't forget the extremely absorbent napkin which is on the table. Return to the restaurant lobby and go to the pedestal that contains the music system. Unlock it using the robot arm that holds the key. Eject the cylinder and replace it with your own. Press Play. Head back to the Maître'D. He will now be relaxed enough to loosen – via remote control – his grip on Titania's Auditory Centre.



A WORD IN YOUR SHELL-LIKE, PART 2

Go to the Parrot Room, which is opposite the Embarkation Lobby on the top of the well. First, drag the chevron identifier for the room into your PET so it's



Your assigned room; 3rd class, Floor 38, Elevator 3, Room 15

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FOUL PLAY

MOTORHEAD

Motorhead. Yes. A jolly good name of a band but not the best racer ever unfortunately. Still, can't have everything, can we?

SUPERCARS MODE
In personal options, enter name as '[illegible]', and team as '[illegible]'.
MEGA-SPEED(?) MODE
In personal options, enter name as 'Demon', and team as 'Green'.
LA-STYLE SUSPENSION
In personal options, enter name as '[illegible]', and team as 'west'.
MOON GRAVITY
In personal options, enter name as 'Buzz Aldrin', and team as 'NASA'.
IGNITION MODE
In personal options, enter name as 'Ignition', and team as 'UDO'.
AVENGER (hardware acceleration only)
In personal options, enter name as 'Revenge', and team as 'Zx'. The cars will be replaced with the Avenger sprite from the ZX-Spectrum game.
WATER MODE (hardware acceleration only)
In personal options, enter name as '[illegible]', and team as 'H2O'.
ALL CARS & TRACKS
In personal options, enter name as '[illegible]', and team as '[illegible]'.
HELL MODE (hardware acceleration only)
In personal options, enter name as '[illegible]', and team as '[illegible]'.
TRON MODE (Glide only)
In personal options, enter name as 'tribute to tron'.

Ah what is fame but an empty bubble, what is gold but a transient shining trouble
-Fentible, you're the most useful person on this ship
Really?
-oh yes

Current location: The Top of the Well

It's recorded. Next, click and drag the bird into your inventory. Go directly to the Succ-U-Bus in the same room. (Don't go elsewhere first because the parrot will escape.) Set the destination for the chevron identifier of your 2nd class cabin and send the parrot there. Turn the Succ-U-Bus dial all the way to the right. Go to Scraliontis' Room and activate the Succ-U Bus, which will inform you of your "package's" arrival. Take an elevator to that cabin. Let the parrot out of the Succ-U-Bus. Go over to the bowl of pistachio nuts and click on it; the parrot will come over and eat it all, leaving an empty bowl. That bowl is one of Titania's ears, so take it.

CENTRAL CORE CHICKEN CELEBRATION

Take any elevator up to a 3rd class floor (such as the 28th), and go to the SGT restaurant. Pull the lever on top for a plain roasted chicken to emerge. Place it in your inventory, and clean it with the absorbent napkin. Put it back on the third row of the servo cubicles. It will now be covered with mustard. (If it's covered with anything else, like tomato sauce, wipe it clean once again with the napkin and try another cubicle.) Grab the chicken. If you mess up and it gets cold before you can feed it to the parrot, offer it to the Succ-U-Bus. That way, you can go back and get another. Go to the nearest Succ-U-Bus. Drag the chevron for the Parrot Room onto it, and send the mustard-covered chicken there. Then it's back to the Parrot Room. Remove the chicken from the Succ-U Bus and drag it beyond the left side of the cage. (You have to lure the parrot over there.) While it is greedily wolfing the chicken down, quickly grab its perch. This is the Central Core.

SEASONAL SPEECH CENTRE

Head back to Leovinus' room, where you should place the green fuse in its proper slot and turn the knob all the way to the right. Then you'll want to get back to the top of the Well and take the Pellerator to the Arboretum. The seasonal changes are working now, so change it to autumn. Look for the red object hanging down from the tree and knock it off with the long stick. This is Titania's Speech Centre.

BIG MOUTH STRIKES AGAIN

Change the weather in the Arboretum to winter. Now, turn around. The entire place has frozen. Move back towards the fake Pellerator. Turn around and advance to the nearest gondola. Its robot gondolier has a loose chest casing. Click on it, revealing two levers. Use the Maître'D Bot's two arms in your inventory to hold down both levers, and remove its faceplate. It is Titania's mouth.

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Return to Titania's Chamber and approach her. Put all 11 pieces of her in the right slots, using the four centres last. The correct order on the centres is yellow, red, blue, green. At this point, Titania herself should rise up and speak to you.

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Go to the Helmet Station on the Bridge. Insert your old home photo in the slot, then start up the Helmet using your PET. This puzzle looks difficult, but it's very simple. Click on a star in the photo, so that it's highlighted with a cross. Now click on the Helmet, and line up the cross with a star that has a diamond around it. When the light on your console blinks, hit the 'L' key to lock the co-ordinate in. Click on the photo again on your PET and repeat this procedure twice, to lock in three co-ordinates. Now go to the Bridge Wheel. Click the button on the right to start the Starship. That's it. You've done it. The ship now takes you home, or rather, back to your smashed-up home, where you'll meet Leovinus (who, by the way, is played by Douglas Adams). By the intergalactic law of salvage rights you now own the ship. Hooray! PC

-howdy
I feel rotten I do
-you don't sound too good either
It's very nice to make your aquaintance. Huhuhuhuh
-What do you do?

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PLAYING GUIDE PART 2

STARCRAFT

FOUL PLAY

G-POLICE

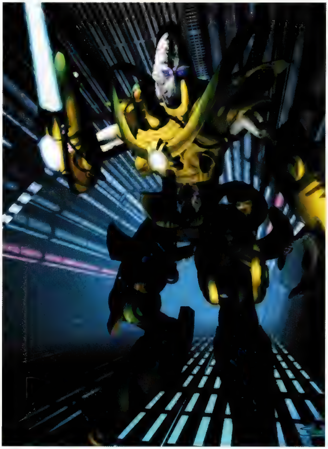
Fly a police interceptor and blow things up. Fab. Type in the following codes at the main menu:

WOOWOO – Havoc Siren
SUPACAM – Enemy FollCam
BENNYHILL – Benny Hill cam
PANTALON – All secret missions (in Training menu)
DOOBRY – Infinite Shields*
MRTICKY – Infinite Weapons*
STATTOE – In-game info
* You can't progress past the current mission when this code is enabled.

Level cheats:
1 – MADGAN
2 – DIRLMAN
3 – SDMAGAR
4 – ACIDOP
5 – JOODAUN
6 – WISMAN
7 – SAEGGY
8 – MAIMAN
9 – BALMAN
10 – [illegible]
11 – AHDOOOO
12 – [illegible]
13 – AMOYMAN
14 – YERMAN
15 – [illegible]
16 – THEYOUK
17 – TONYMASH
18 – ANDYDROM
19 – BIOSIC
20 – TILATIN
21 – JARTHOO
22 – JOHNYZ
23 – CLASSIC
24 – STEVEBOT
25 – ANGUR
26 – EMANUEL
27 – [illegible]
28 – STUBOME
29 – THOMBOT
30 – SPEAKE
31 – PUCOSE
32 – BOOOOO
33 – CARBHOT
34 – MROOK
35 – SAGLORD

1 THE PROTOSS

This sleek and aristocratic elder race in *Starcraft* are the antithesis of the cheap and grasping Zerg swarms. The Protoss are few, very expensive and slow to proliferate. But their elite units are the most powerful individuals in the game. The relatively compact Protoss armies make them a more manageable race to play, though their spellcasters' powers of deception and infiltration open up a vast range of subtle and frankly, despicable ploys to the Protoss player.



PROBES

The joy of the Probe is, of course, that it doesn't hang around waiting for buildings to be constructed. So one Probe can get a well furnished secondary base under way in very little time if you have the resources available. Versus the Zerg, Probes can defend reasonably well against the early Zergling rush and they are also immune to broodling attacks. Against Terrans they won't set off spider mines and so are a cheap way to clear mine fields. It's often a good idea to protect their work area with a photon tower or two to prevent them going down to guerrilla attacks.

ZEALOTS

The hardest basic ground unit in the game, a few Zealots can easily handle larger groups of Marines or Hydralisks. When fully upgraded they hit hard and should form the bulk of your ground forces during every phase of the game. Their main weakness is their vulnerability to ranged units and air attack. So to use them most effectively make sure they're supported by Dragoons or other ranged attackers. You'll generally be outnumbered by enemy forces so always concentrate your Zealot attacks. If they spread out, they'll be surrounded and the enemy will get free hits as the Zealot can only fight one unit at a time. So keep them back to back and their double strike rate will chew through the foe.

COUNTERMEASURES: Mutalisks and Terran flyers will massacre unsupported Zealots. Also, Firebats and Hydralisks can attack from range and outpace Zealots in the early stages before the Protoss player upgrades their speed.

DRAGOONS

Dragoons are the standard Protoss tank and formidable as an artillery or anti-air unit. Unfortunately their slow firing rate makes them vulnerable to attack from fast melee units. Therefore they should only really be used in a supporting role for Zealots who can fend off swift troops or close in on ranged attackers. Keep your Dragoons behind your front line troops and let them rain ordnance on the foe while your Zealots soak up return fire. Once range and attack are upgraded they pack more heat than a photon cannon.

Defensively, Dragoons in the base will fend off aerial threats. A squadron parked next to a shield battery is an excellent base defence combo. Keep recharging their shields with the battery while they pick off attackers.

COUNTERMEASURES: Fast moving and numerous Zerglings can quickly close in on Dragoons and overwhelm them by weight of numbers. Siege tanks in siege mode will also massacre them with their greater range.

7700
9050
Terran Vulture
Corporal
Kills: 0
80/80

SHUTTLES

Fairly obvious really, your front line taxi service that go down quicker than Geri to anti air units. Scouts or Carriers can provide escort protection. They can transport up to two Archons (or the equivalent in other types), and if combined with the Arbiter's Recall spell can hold even more

SCOUTS

Scouts have an excellent air-to-air attack that is more than a match for enemy air power. However, their air-ground capability is weak and frittering them away is disastrous because they are very expensive to build Thus they're best used in a mutually supportive role with ground forces

Scouts also make first rate reconnaissance units, once they've had their speed and sight upgraded, swiftly zipping around the largest of maps. Squadrons of Scouts can quickly puncture unprotected Overlords and wreck Zerg spying efforts, while large groups should be used to intercept and kill enemy spellcasters like Queens and Science vessels Combine them with an Observer to annihilate cloaked Wraith's (which you are vastly superior to in the air) or burrowed Zerg units

COUNTERMEASURES: Numerous cheap anti-air units like Hydralisks and Marines chew scouts

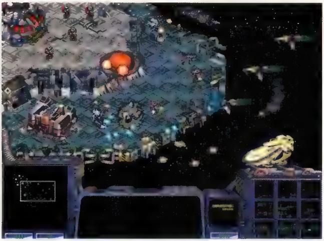
TEMPLAR

The key Templar ability is Psionic Storm. Equivalent to *Warcraft II*'s Death & Decay (minus building damage) it is a lethal area burst when unleashed on large groups of enemy units. A juiced up Templar can fire it off twice and saturate a wide area Take note. no additional damage is taken if you concentrate multiple Psionic Storms on a single area. It's usually worth running a couple of Zealots into the heart of the enemy to hold them up while you zero in with your magic. Or just pick off enemy packs laying into your buildings Make sure you cloak the Templar with an Arbiter though, as a Siege tank has a longer range than Psionic Storm. Try keeping a unit of Zealots on hand as well to finish off tough units like tanks that aren't quite killed by the Storm

Hallucination is a superb 'paranoia' spell that sows confusion among your opponents and distracts them from your real units Each casting creates two fakes, which cause no physical damage take double damage and last for a short time only. However, they'll save your true units a lot of pain when you mix real and replica together. Alternatively you can bind the hallucinations to a different key and use them as a diversion, hoping to draw off the bulk of the defence while your actual attack waltzes through the enemy base

Beware, Templars are physically weak and very vulnerable to any enemy attack. So always move them around in pairs. This way if they come under attack while unsupported, you can merge them into an Archon. This will double your shield strength and give you a chance to bail them out with some rapid response units Similarly when you're base-defending and your Templars have exhausted their mana, summon Archon's to bring their superior firepower into play

COUNTERMEASURES: Area effect spells like EMP or Ensnare will dispel all hallucinations



FOUL PLAY

COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES

"Oi wish oi could do dat!" "Oi'm cummin'". Ah, those quaint [illegible] accents. Only a mother could love 'em.

Level codes
2 – [illegible]
3 – ZOOIT
4 – [illegible]
5 – KA7DS
6 – [illegible]
7 – [illegible]
8 – [illegible]
9 – [illegible]
10 – [illegible]
11 – [illegible]
12 – [illegible]
13 – [illegible]
14 – [illegible]
15 – XQWBC

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PlayStation Magazine
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Spice World: Too little, too late?
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Issue 35 ON SALE JULY 15TH

REAVERS

A heavy artillery unit, the Reaver is the home improvement arm of the Protoss army. Their Scarab ammunition out-ranges towers so they should always be used to pummel any base into submission. Ensure that you have built plenty of ammunition before you attack to avoid unnecessary embarrassment later. They do, of course, move pitifully slowly, so protect them with Dragoons and Zealots and entertain the possibility of shipping them in via shuttle or the Arbiter's Recall spell.

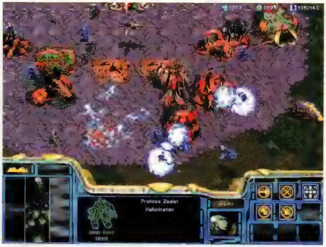
For solid defence, place a pair of Reavers just behind a Photon cannon. Their area effect shells will slaughter massed ranks of light enemy wholesale and they can give Ultralisks and Siege tanks a fair old wallop as well. Always aim their shots into the centre of an enemy pack for maximum splash damage amusement and try to ensure they all choose different targets.

COUNTERMEASURES: Reconnaissance is vital for spotting approaching Reavers on the ground or in shuttles. Fast moving flyers can then tear into them until air defence turns up (Reavers have no air defence of their own). Burrowed units can also surprise Reavers lagging behind the front line. Spread out when approaching Reavers to minimise casualties and take them on with many small groups, someone is bound to get through.

OBSERVERS

These infiltration units are the key to Protoss control of the battlefield. Build plenty and leave one in every possible area of strategic interest, particularly expansion sites. Surround the enemy base with them so you'll be able to keep constant tabs on his murky toings and froings. Also attach one to any attacking force to put a rapid stop to the pranks of enemy cloakers.

COUNTERMEASURES: Enemy towers and detector units will blow the Observer's cover.



ARCHON

Arguably the most powerful unit in the game, this mighty Protoss warrior is equally at home against flyers and ground forces. Though very expensive they are fantastically well armoured and heavily armed, but their reload rate is slow. Use them late on in the game to lay waste to the enemy's most potent threats. They have little to fear and should wade in against virtually anything, just remember to pull them out in time to return them to your shield batteries.

COUNTERMEASURES: Use massed firepower, or, the Archon's only predator: Terran Science vessels and their hit-point sapping EMP ability.

CARRIER

Indisputably the most awesome airborne unit *Starcraft* knows. Mass interceptor swarms can cause an extreme mess and if you create Carrier fleets, cloaked by Arbiters, then you have the the ultimate combination of firepower and subterfuge.

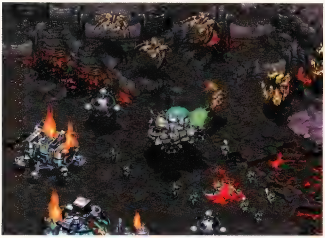
Carriers are slow, however, and so should always be accompanied by giving Scout escorts that will absorb anti-air fire. Two Scouts per Carrier is a good balance. Don't commit your Carriers to battle until you've upgraded their attack and Interceptor capacity. Then you can maximise their terror value by casting hallucination on them, darkening the skies with their deadly sleekness.

COUNTERMEASURES: Zerg Scourges are made for Carrier carnage while cloaked Wraiths give many a Protoss general sleepless nights.

ARBITERS

The Arbiter's ability to automatically cloak any Protoss unit within a short range is extraordinarily powerful. If you choose your approach carefully, you can use this to march straight into the enemy base with a mighty taskforce underneath your stealth apron. But that's not the end of the Arbiter's jolly handy powers. With Recall you can manoeuvre an Arbiter into position in the enemy base and then immediately use the spell to pick up a group of Protoss units anywhere on the map and teleport them to the Arbiter's

⇨



FOUL PLAY

WORLD CUP 98

Standing head and shoulders above the masses of cheap 'n' cheerful cash-ins swamping the market this summer, World Cup 98 is really not half bad. Just like FIFA: RTWC98, change the player's name to one of the cheat codes and press Enter. After entering all the cheat codes, press back to undo the changes so that the player's real name is not changed. Now go back to the main menu and press Scroll lock to activate the cheat menu.

Cheat codes:
Dex – Enable 1982 classic match
Hero – Enable '58, '74, '86, '66 classic match
Kenny – Flaming ball
Gabe – Big heads
Kyle – Skeleton players
Cartman – Take a dive
Gonzo – Hot potato
Mr Hat – Crazy ball
Powder – Silly moves
Nelis – Alien mode

SPEC OPS

A fantastic concept is undermined by disappointing execution. Still, we laugh all the same. Have some cheats.

1. Move the savedata.txt file out of the Spec Ops directory and get access to all missions.
2. During a mission, hit Alt+Shift+V and go to your items list and you will see 'Viewfinder'. Select this, the screen will turn blue for a second and the ranger will jump. Hitting 1 resets the clock to 0:00, and 4 will make your ranger invincible.

FOUL PLAY

INCOMING
Whoo[illegible] of the pretty lights [illegible] for hours, the [illegible]

Hold down Shift and type:
WIRE[illegible] – Turns off the textures
WHATSTHEPOINT – Turns graphics to the dots
SOLID[illegible] – Invulnerability
FLATBROKE – No shading
GOURAUD – Gouraud shading on
OLDMACDONALD – Protect farm from jumping COWS !!!
FLYMETOTHEMOON – Racing in the moon
HAVEALL – You got it all
SUPERGRAVITY – One shot kills 'em all
SUPERSHOOT – Same as SUPERGRAVITY
INVULNERABILITY – That's just what it means
INFINITELIVES – And so is this one
INFINITEWEAPONS – Infinite weapons
MAS[illegible] – At least it changes textures on and off

Cheat keys
Function keys turn cheats on and off
F2 – Easy shoot
F3 – Invulnerability
F4 – Infinite lives
F5 – Infinite weapons
F6 – Smart bomb
F7 – Quit
F8 – Shows current situation
F9 – [illegible] situation
F10 – Frame wait on/off
F11 – Restart

[illegible] spot. Calling in a massive assault force to lightly defended and remote areas of the enemy base is guaranteed to have him banging his panic button. Try six Reavers at the back of the base.

Stasis renders units (friend or foe) immobile and invulnerable. Thus you can freeze out important enemy defenders for the duration of an assault while you pick off their support. Or you can protect your own key units until reinforcements arrive.

COUNTERMEASURES: Enemy detectors.

PYLONS

Simultaneously act as 'farms' and provide power for Protoss structures. Always build multiple Pylons to act as back-ups for Photon Cannons and other important structures otherwise the enemy will render you helpless by singling out infrastructure.

PHOTON CANNONS

The only Protoss static anti-air or anti ground facility. They provide limited firepower and are very vulnerable to attack from longer range Zerg and Terran units. Unfortunately you still need them for their detection abilities. Build them in clusters and support them with Reavers and Dragoons.

SHIELD BATTERY

Recharge your unit's shields almost instantaneously. Arrange Shield Batteries near your base's main defensive points so your troops can fall back to them. Very powerful defences can be formed by arranging Dragoons and Carriers around Batteries. They can recharge whenever damaged and the enemy will sustain massive losses trying to dig them out.

PROTOSS STRATEGIES

OPENING MOVES

Early on in the game you should concentrate on pumping out Zealots. Ideally, if you have the resources, you'll have three or more Gateways popping out as fast as they possibly can. Though Zealots are the cheapest Protoss unit, they are more than a match for their Zerg or Terran counterparts and will savage any enemy they can close with. They're also Vespene free so you don't need to build an Assimilator and divide your workers between resources early on as the other races do.

Keep chipping away at the money mineral growths so you can keep churning out Zealots. Once your field is completely covered with Probes, build your Assimilator. Put your Forge or Cybernetics Core on hold until the Assimilator is running and you're collecting Vespene gas apace. Though the Forge provides Photon Cannons and unit upgrades, you can't upgrade until you've stockpiled some gas. And at this stage you're better off with more Zealots than a Photon Cannon. Again there's no point investing in a Cybernetics Core when it accesses your more advanced buildings, but they need large amounts of gas.

Send the first few Zealots out on a scouting mission. Then when you've amassed around eight Zealots it's time to go on the offensive (providing you're playing a reasonably manageable map). Harassing your opponent early on is worth doing as you gain information on his strategy (is he building multiple 'barracks' and preparing an infantry assault? Or is he throwing his efforts into early air superiority?), and you'll prune back his military development. Early assaults should avoid attacking durable buildings and instead try to victimise his work force to slow down his economy.

Split your initial force into two groups so you can draw off his defences with one while the other canes his Drones.

MIDDLE GROUND

The Protoss air force is probably the best in the game so once your economy is thriving, it's worth trying to establish mastery of the skies. Upgrade your Scout's speed and then use marauding packs of them to attack enemy flyers. Though break off if you meet any ground-air resistance. Zerg

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FOUL PLAY

UNREAL

Some cheat codes for the superb shooter.

ALLAMMO – Gives you 999 ammo for all of your guns.

FLY – Lets you fly around.

GHOST – Lets you walk through walls.

WALK – Returns you to walking mode if you are flying or ghosting.

GOD – Makes you invulnerable to all attacks.

INVISIBLE – Turns you invisible.

KILLPAWNS – Kills all monsters.

WALK – Turns off 'GHOST' or 'FLY'.

SLOMO ? – Slows or speeds up the game. 1.0 is normal.

SUMMON – Lets you add a weapon or an item to the world. For example:

SUMMON EIGHTBALL
SUMMON FLAKCANNON
SUMMON NALI
SUMMON DISPERSIONPISTOL
SUMMON AUTOMAG
SUMMON STINGER
SUMMON ASMD
SUMMON RAZORJACK
SUMMON GESBIORIFLE
SUMMON RIFLE
SUMMON MINIGUN
SUMMON SKAARJWARRIOR

PLAYERSONLY – Freezes time. Press again to unfreeze.

OPEN MAPNAME – Jump to any map. Just enter the name like OPEN DIG.

BEHINDVIEW 1 – Puts you in *Tomb Raider*-style view.

BEHINDVIEW 0 – Resets this.

FLUSH – If you start getting weird garbage graphics on wall textures or creatures, type this to fix it.

⇨ Scourges and Queens are prime targets if you spot any. Upgraded Scouts are fast enough to intercept the enemy, loose off a broadside and then retreat from danger unharmed. If you do take damage then pull your Scouts back to the Shield Batteries and replenish them.

Once Carriers come into play, your Scouts should mostly be used as an air cordon: dealing with units that might otherwise threaten the Carriers. Carriers should obliterate the enemy from maximum range, and you should prioritise targets who can still fire at you from that distance. Once Carrier threats are eliminated then turn your wrath upon the ground targets. Units of Zealots can also be used to suppress ground units that are giving your Carriers grief.

Once your second base is up and running, build a Citadel of Adun and research Zealot speed. This is the key upgrade that allows the Zealot to overcome its lack of ballistic attack. Now you should build the Templar Archives. From now on you should never be without Templars and can use their Psionic Storm attack to butcher enemy troop formations en masse. Strike with Psionic Storm when his troops are occupied fighting yours. If he can move them then the Psionic Storm will be mostly ineffective. Bear in mind that the Templars are physically very weak, so they should generally lurk to the rear of your forces ready to decimate foe from a position of safety.

END GAME

If you can fend off your insatiable adversary long enough, then you will truly be able to demonstrate the full power of the Protoss. By now your Scouts and Carriers should control the skies; while Zealot packs, the Templar's Psionic Storm and Carriers scour the enemy on the ground. Hallucination and Cloaking allow you to successfully disguise your intentions from your opponent and Recall allows you to harry him with surprise attacks.

2736
798
Terran Ghost
Specialist
Kills: 0
MENU

Hallucination will become increasingly important as your major units start to dominate. Apart from the panic value of the spell, it is great for drawing fire from your expensive Carriers, etc. and so increases their survivability. (See the Arbiter entry earlier on).

INFORMATION WARFARE

The key to *Starcraft* is intelligence. The more you know of his movements and build-ups, the more efficiently you can use resources to stop him while minimising your own casualties. The Observer is obviously the crucial unit for the Protoss in this regard. First put all the main routes to the enemy's base under surveillance. Place Observers at choke points like ramps and narrow paths so that you will always know when he is expanding or launching an attack.

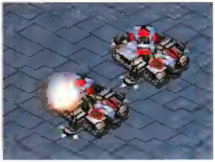
The next stage is to place Observers around the fringe of his base so that you know what kind of base, and therefore strategy, he's working on and where his soft underbelly is (presumably where your Observers aren't being detected and killed).

Eventually you should try to infiltrate his base by carefully threading a couple of Observers past the detectors. In time honoured real time strategy fashion, the best routes are usually flush against the map edge. Then once your man has moved in, try placing him on top of a building. This will give him some measure of camouflage, so even if he's lit up on the map, your opponent may miss him on screen.

Of course, you don't want your enemy to enjoy the same luxuries, so space your Photon Cannons and defensive Observers so that no Ghost can enter undetected. You can try patrolling with Observers and positioning Photon Cannons at choke points for complete security.

Next month: The Terrans.

4329
808
104/108



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MAD BIKES!
COOL CHICKS!

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DRAGGING MOTORING DOWN TO OUR LEVEL

Q&A

A verdant, lush isle anchored at the centre of the maelstrom. A port of hope in the storm of confusion. That's how we like to think of Q&A, anyway.

By JES BICKHAM

My name is Gargan.
He sniffs loudly.
job
murder
bye

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2

Q After finishing the (rather short) *Leisure Suit Larry 1*, I made a start on the second game I have won the cruise and the jackpot and caught my ship. I then escaped on the lifeboat and found myself washed up on an island My problem is, when I try to cross the beach on the right, I am caught by two KGB agents and the game ends. How do I get round this problem? I think it may involve a disguise as a woman. Please help.

Liam Harper, Brechin

A You're on the right track there, although why you'd want to play such pitifully weak, sexist dross is beyond us. Oh well Here's what to do. In the restaurant, after you get a seat, get the knife from the buffet table and leave. In the hotel room, get the soap and matches leave the maid alone. Now leave the room As you're walking through the jungle, wait until you're near the potted flowers, and type GET FLOWERS. If it keeps saying "You're not close enough", keep trying. You'll get them eventually. In the barber shop, sit down in the chair. When you get back to the beach, start all over again Go back down In the restaurant, just leave. In the hotel room, go into the dressing area behind the bathroom and change into the bikini. Swimwear on, you should type PUT MONEY IN BIKINI TOP. Now leave. Back in the barber shop, sit down in the chair again. After a couple of swift snips you'll now find you look – hurrah! like a girl. Back at the beach, go to the right. You can now swan right past the KGB agents, and they won't bat an eyelid. Except, possibly, to admire your legs

PAGAN: ULTIMA VIII

Q Please could you help me with *Pagan: Ultima VIII*. I have visited Mythradin via the plateau and have returned safely, but now I can't find Vividos anywhere. Can you please tell me where he is?

John Huntington, Ely

A I think we can probably cast forth a few pearls of wisdom in your general direction. During your conversation with Mythradin, be sure to purchase the secret door scroll While he tells you it only works once, you can, in fact, use it several times, so one is all you'll ever need. You also want to be certain he mentions the Necromancers, so that Vividos will be around when you come to visit. When the conversation ends, Mythradin gives you the recall device, a small disk that can teleport you instantly to any active receiver on the island. It will work anywhere apart from one place: the Sorcerer enclave. You *cannot* teleport out of that area, although you can teleport in. You have to go all the way back to the double doors before you can teleport out And remember, be sure to go upstairs to turn on the receiver up there, so that you can get back here the easy way later. From here, you might want to walk out and get the Hammer of Strength, or teleport directly back to Tenebrae. Whichever you choose, the next thing is to go visit the cemetery, out the east gate. Just follow the path and you'll get there. And who should be waiting? Vividos, of course

LANDS OF LORE II

Q I am currently playing *Lands Of Lore II* and I seem to be completely stuck in the Huline Jungle. Any chance you could point me in the right direction?

IJ McAdam, Liverpool

OVER TO YOU...

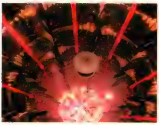
Plenty of responses this month to the problems of your gaming brethren. An extra special thumbs-up of commendation must go to Daniel Mosquera Silveira of – wait for it – Brazil, who sent reams and reams of solutions for practically every reader that has had a query in the past, ooh, millennium. Well done, sir. You play to the rhythm of the samba, as Barry Davies says.

A To Mr Michael Stott's *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* problem (PCG 57), about Crete Fists path maze. After finding Sternhart's body, get his staff. Climb up the chain in the waterfall and find a door that is blocked with a big slab. Push the slab SEVERAL times. Beat up all the German guards, with two exceptions: 1) Hans is too strong to beat. Hide behind one of the two stone slabs. When Hans comes by, push the slab onto him. 2) Arnold is also too strong. Use the ship's rib to pry the boulder in the next room and make it roll onto him. The first time you try this you'll fail, so take the stalactite and pry the boulder again. After Arnold's down, search his body and find the-fish-on-a-string. Look in the

Hello! What's this?
Give
Pick up
Use
Open
Talk to
Push
Close
Look at
Pull

A But of course. It's a rather long and complex process, however, so do bear with us. Your main goal is to find Shalla and her child. First, go to the village by following the path to the north. Talk to the guard He'll explain about the situation there You can't enter the village until you find the lost child. Continue along the path and speak with the Huline women. Ask them about the lost child. Continue your journey to the southwest area of the jungle (take the west path and cross two rivers). Near a small bridge you'll meet two Huline women. Talk to them and they will tell you about the big spider inside the Hive cave that scared them. Nearby, you'll find the entrance to the bushes. Go through these bushes to the southwest area – that's the entrance to the Hive cave. Shalla's inside, but there are a few hazards that may hinder your progress. Here's how to deal with them.

1) Use your Spark spell to destroy the bushes blocking your way - they'll simply grow back if you just hack 'em down. 2) Avoid that green smoke from the cave's ground as you enter. You'll get poisoned otherwise. 3) You'll eventually come to a tricksy chasm Enter the cave and continue the path until you see a big blue spider. Kill it and take the breast plate from its nest. In this room, there are two small entrances to the west and east. To the north, there's a deep chasm with plenty of stalactites You can continue your journey to the far northwest area in two ways. First, if you're a lizard, you can take the west small entrance. Second, you can shoot the stalactite with your weapons, or the Spark spell, to make a pathway on the chasm. Either way, go to the northwest area of this cave.



At the far northwest area of this cave you'll find a child's skeleton on the cave floor, which is, in fact, the lost child. You can find Shalla by listening for her crying. Kill the blue spider in the room. You'll feel a little earthquake after that and the pillar that blocks your way to the north is now open. Go there and meet Shalla. She'll tell you about the story of the Executioner (the big blue spider), and say that she'll return to the village. Go back to the village and this time you can enter.

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 2

Q I've got a question about *Little Big Adventure 2*. I just cannot kill Funfrock and his Grobo clones. Please could you tell me how to do it, because I'm desperate?

Jennifer Winchester, Eastbourne

A Nary a month goes by without at least 97.43 cries of help for *Little Big Adventure* and its sequel Congratulations, Jennifer, for you are this month's *LBA*-help recipient. When you've jumped from pillar to pillar, then onto the book, up the arm, and into the cave, and seen the wizards trapped in a barrier, turn the monitors off in this order: 2, 1, 4, 3. Hit the lever, and they'll be free. The wizards will blow an opening for you in the gate, allowing you to climb higher. You'll meet FunFrock, and he'll start to lower the children down. The chase is fairly simple, except on the 3rd floor You'll get a key, run through a gate, and see a green tile and two elephants but no way down. Kill the elephants and the passage will open. Chase after the children until FunFrock is walking towards the chain holding them up, and he tells you that it's too late. Put your shield on, run at him, and kill him before he can kill the children Once the real FunFrock (the one that doesn't flash red) and all fake FunFrocks are dead, walk to the lava where the children are, or to the right side if they're not. Marvel at the glorious ending. PCG

CUSTOMER HELP-LINES

Most publishers offer their own games support service, so if you're stuck on one of their titles, it's always worth phoning them directly.

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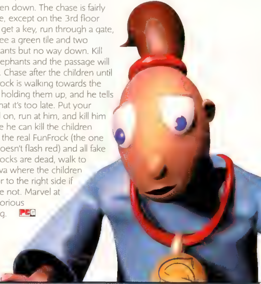

pit, find Sophia and free her with your whip. Let Sophia read the inscription on the stonepointer near the labyrinth exit. It indicates that Thera is the lesser colony.

Daniel Mosquera Silveira, Brazil

A This is in response to Alexander Carson's problem with *The Secret Of Monkey Island 2* in PCG 57. First off, you have to blow the ship's horn, move the flags and use the green spit thickener. Now look at the spectators and you'll see a woman wearing a sash around her waist. Get your cursor over the Ptooie button, and when the sash is blown by the wind, spit away. Your spit should sail into first place, allowing you to collect the plaque!

John Huntington, Ely

Q I need to know three things about *Virtual Springfield*. I can't find the secret key to get into the Stonecutters. Can anybody help? I also need to know where to find all 74 cards.

Daniel Corcoran, Chorley

(Sorry, but that's only two things, Daniel. Or 75, if you count all the cards individually. Are you sure you don't need help with maths too?)

Q Can anyone help me get through *The Lost Files Of Sherlock Holmes: The Case Of The Rose Tattoo?* I can't find a way to make Mrs Ratchett confess that it was Mr Pratt who took the formulae and that she was the one who took it back to the ministry. Your help will be very much appreciated.

Lee Samways, Surrey

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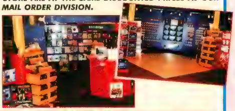

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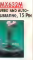

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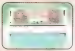

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So, Windows 98 is finally here costing more than Windows 95 did at launch, but what do you get for you money? Simon Williams finds out.

BEARDY BIT

Hello, and welcome to the new look Systems. Actually, it's rather like the one of years gone by but restored to its former glory! This month we kick off the most eagerly awaited (by some at least) PC upgrade in the last three years. Windows98 has promised a lot but has it delivered? For gamers, I'd say there's currently not much benefit in spending £85 on the upgrade. If I were you, I'd install *Internet Explorer 4.01* and buy three new games instead!

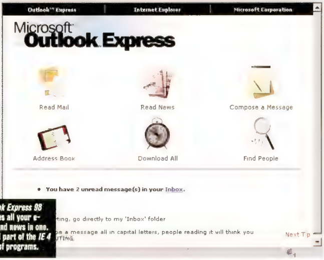
SIMON WILLIAMS

SO, barring any last minute injunctions, Windows 98 is here, complete with Internet Explorer 4 and all the other stuff you've been able to download from the Net during the last few months. So is it the next true version of Windows, or purely a conglomeration of bug fixes to tide Microsoft over until the Great Coming Together with Windows NT?

There are some new things in Windows 98, but it's not like the difference between Windows 3 and Windows 95. This is more of a tightening up of how things are done with some useful extras which should make your system run more smoothly and possibly slightly quicker than under Windows 95

INTERNET INFILTRATION

The most obvious difference between Windows 95 and 98 is the infiltration of Internet Explorer, particularly if you haven't used IE 4 before. You can now choose to display files and folders in traditional windows or as panes in the IE 4 Web browser



Outlook™ Express | Internet Explorer | Microsoft Corporation

Microsoft Outlook Express

- You have 2 unread message(s) in your Inbox.

ting, go directly to my 'Inbox' folder

pe a message all in capital letters, people reading it will think you
UTING

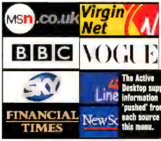
***Outlook Express 98* handles all your e-mail and news in one. It's all part of the *IE 4* suite of programs.**

More than that, though, you can now get Windows to check your configuration, particularly the drivers you use, against a databank on a new Web site Microsoft have set up

The idea is that rather than going to different Web sites for support on the components of your PC, you can dial the one site and let Windows itself report what you have installed. You'll then be offered the latest versions of the drivers for your equipment, which can be downloaded and installed automatically. Sounds good in principle, but it could lead to corrupt configurations if you get conflicts between drivers. This can happen under Windows 95 as well, of course – when you install drivers manually – but if it all happens automatically, you have less control

As well as the latest version of Microsoft's browser, a full copy of Outlook Express 98 is included. This is the e-mail and news program which is really very easy to use and quite sophisticated in what it can do. Like the rest of IE 4, though, it has been freely available for download for some time.

The Active Desktop is one of the key features of IE 4 and subsequently appears in Windows 98. With this you can display Web pages or videos directly on your desktop. Microsoft have signed up a number of 'push information providers, from Virgin to PointCast and Vogue to the BBC, and you can schedule your Windows 98



The Active Desktop supports information 'pushed' from each source in this menu.

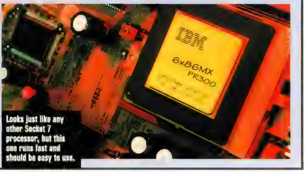
DOWN BELOW Hot new widgets to stick under the bonnet of your PC.

300 for 150

IBM and Cyrix have had this comfy relationship going for the last couple of years, whereby Cyrix designs new 6x86 Pentium-clones, IBM then makes them, and the companies split them wafer for wafer. The latest product of this mutual back-scratching is the 6x86-PR300, which is an interesting chip in a couple of important ways.

For a start, it's likely to be pretty cheap. Prices being quoted are currently around £150 and they're expected to drop down to around the £120 mark within a month or so. This makes it the cheapest 300MHz equivalent chip by quite some distance. You will note that I said equivalent, as this processor uses the Pentium Rating which AMD used to use. The chip actually clocks at 233MHz, which is the second interesting thing about it.

Most current Socket 7 system boards are rated up to 233MHz, because this is the change-over point which Intel decreed between Pentium and Pentium II. It continues to make Pentium MMXs up to 233MHz and no higher (except in portables). Higher



Looks just like any other Socket 7 processor, but this one runs fast and should be easy to use.

GameStation II

■ Supplier **Evesham Micros** ■ Contact **0800 496 0800** ■ Price **£1,369** ■ Processor **Pentium II 300** ■ Secondary cache **512k** ■ Memory **64Mb (384Mb max)** ■ Hard drive **6Gb, Quantum** ■ CD-ROM **32-speed, Panasonic** ■ Graphics card **4Mb ATI 3D Rage Pro** ■ Monitor **17-inch CTX** ■ Other bits **12Mb Creative 3D Blaster (Voodoo 2), AWE 64 sound card, Yamaha YST-MS 25 speakers, F15E Raptor joystick** ■ Bundled software **Windows 98, PC-cillin, sound utilities**

Evesham have coupled together a lot of strong hardware, including a big monitor and fine speakers, to produce their eminently playworthy GameStation II.

More companies are aiming machines directly at the serious gamer and Evesham's GameStation II is a fast and furious 300MHz Pentium II with most of the trimmings. Built into a midi tower case, the Pentium II chip is supported with a healthy 64Mb of memory and the obligatory 512K of secondary cache. A 32-speed Panasonic CD-ROM sits in the top of the case with a standard floppy drive below that. There's plenty of storage space from a 6Gb Quantum hard drive, too.

"Surprisingly, there's no modem. Evesham might want to add one for further gaming pleasure."

It's the graphics and sound sections of the machine that really excel, though. Evesham tend to go with the main players in both these fields and, in this case, it's Creative that fit the bill. An AWE 64 sound card feeds out to a trio of Yamaha speakers, with the elongated cubes of the two satellites giving plenty of treble response. This is backed up by the thumping bass emanating from the sub-bass woofer, which can sit comfortably out of view under your desk.

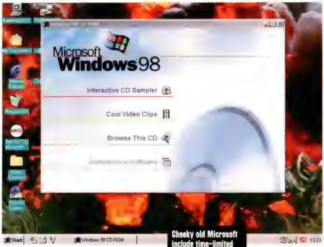
The 4Mb ATI 3D Rage Pro card provides the standard graphics functions, but this is boosted on the 3D side by Creative's version of the Voodoo2 accelerator, with a full 12Mb of additional memory on board. This combination gives the GameStation II the tremendous 3D potential now *de rigeur* for games, particularly through the supplied 17-inch monitor, though there's nothing to demonstrate this immediately, as not a single sample game is included with the OEM Creative card.

In fact, there's no software provided with the machine at all, except Windows 98 – the US Department of Justice permitting, of course – which looks as good as its description in this month's main feature. No games, then, and, even more surprisingly for a games machine, there's no modem included. Evesham might want to think about adding one for 'further gaming pleasure'. Overall, GameStation II's performance was very good and even the desktop backdrop had been set up with a stimulating image of napalm dropping on some alien scum.

PC GAMER

A good choice, but pay extra and get hold of a modem.

86%



Cheeky old Microsoft include time-limited versions of their top-selling applications in Windows 98. Tut.

machine to download information from them, perhaps overnight, so you can read your personalised papers first thing in the morning. You'll need an Internet account, of course, and if you leave your machine unattended, you'll have to hope it logs off properly at the end of the download.

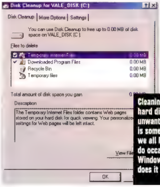
If Microsoft are to be criticised for incorporating IE 4 into their operating system, they should be further scolded for including time-limited samplers of many of its applications, like Office, on the same CD as the new operating system. These are directly available from an option in the Start button directory tree and surely constitute a dodgy way of advertising to a captive audience. Timeshare anyone?

NEW TOOLS

The tools Windows 95 offers for maintaining your system and checking the status of your hard drive are useful and Microsoft have extended these with Wizards for tune-up and maintenance.

Start-up speeds for major applications have been greatly improved. Windows 98 monitors the files which are required each time you load up a program like Word or Excel and makes sure all the files are shuffled next to each other on your hard drive, so that they can be read off sequentially. Big claims are made for this, like 50% improvement in start-up times. When you look at it in the real world, though, this represents around five seconds, which is hardly a big saving. To achieve it, you have to defragment your hard drive on a regular basis which can take several hours to complete.

Disk Clean-Up monitors the bits of programs you don't use regularly and offers to remove them, saving you the space they're taking on the drive. Used with caution, this can be a useful utility to counter against wasted space.


Disk Cleanup for VALE_DISK (C:)

You can use Disk Cleanup to free up to 0.00 MB of disk space on VALE_DISK (C:).

Files to delete

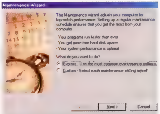
☑	Temporary Internet Files	0.00 MB
✓	Downloaded Program Files	0.00 MB
	Recycle Bin	0.00 MB
	Temporary files	0.00 MB

Total amount of disk space you gain 0.00 MB

Description

The Temporary Internet Files folder contains Web pages stored on your hard disk for quick viewing. Your personalized settings for Web pages will be left intact.

Cleaning your hard disk of unwanted files is something we all have to do occasionally. Windows 98 does it for you.


Maintenance Wizard

The Maintenance wizard adjusts your computer for top-notch performance. Setting up a regular maintenance schedule ensures that you get the most from your computer.

- Your programs run faster than ever
- You get more free hard disk space
- Your system performance is optimal

What do you want to do?

● Express - Use the most common maintenance settings

○ Custom - Select each maintenance setting myself

Regular maintenance can make Word load faster.

If you're still using the older, FAT 16 operating system to structure your hard drive, the new Windows would very much like you to convert to the newer FAT 32 system. To encourage you, it provides a conversion Wizard which will do the job for you without risking any of the data on the drive. FAT 32 is no faster than FAT 16, but usually provides a lot more space on your drive by allocating smaller blocks of disk space to hold each file.

HARDWARE SUPPORT

Windows 98 now handles three key technologies that were only available in Windows 95 by adding patches. The Universal Serial Ports (USPs), those small rectangular sockets on the back of recent PCs, now have full support so, in theory at least, it's easier to connect a number of peripherals to your PC at one time, by simply daisy-chaining one device into the USP socket on the next.

This will be all well and good when there are a few more USPs available. System board manufacturers have been very good at providing the sockets, but there are still very few devices to plug into them.

There are even fewer IEEE1394 (also known as Firewire) peripherals available, though this standard is also directly supported by Windows 98. This is a much faster connection than USP and could support the kinds of data transfer needed by networks, hard drives and monitor connections. Again,

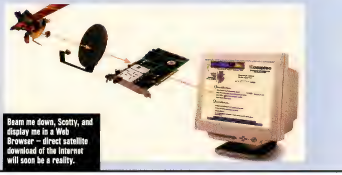
DOWN BELOW

clock rates are only available in the Pentium II range, so there's little point in making Socket 7 boards which go higher than the 233MHz mark.

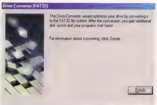
By clocking the 6x86-PR300 at 233MHz, IBM and Cyrix have a chip which will fit any current board capable of taking 6x86s (i.e. the vast majority of them), and will give it a very useful speed improvement at minimal cost. I predict a rosy future for this highly cost-effective option, even when AMD announce their new K6-2 chip, which you'll be able to read about here, next month.

Internet by Satellite – Now!

After last month's mini-diatribe on LEOs, GEOs and other satellite-based wonders – all scheduled for sometime after the Millennium – I came across another system this month which is already in field trials. Eutelsat, a European consortium which launches telecommunications satellites and sells bandwidth on them to commercial companies, has a new venture which will transmit Internet, as well as sound and video links, direct from a series of Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO) satellites, called Hot Birds.



Beam me down, Scotty, and display me in a Web Browser – direct satellite download of the Internet will soon be a reality.


Drive Converter (FAT32)

The Drive Converter wizard optimizes your drive by converting it to the FAT32 file system. After the conversion, you gain additional disk space and your programs start faster

For information about converting, click Details

FAT32 can claw back some unused disk space.

you can daisy-chain devices to a 1394 connection and, again, this might prove useful when there are more devices made to use it.

Directly relevant to games players is the facility to connect more than one monitor to a single machine and have Windows work with them both as a single device. In desktop terms, this means you can have a large virtual desktop and simply drag windows or files from one monitor to the other, as if they were all on the same screen.

In games, this means you can have a wider view through the cockpit, or perhaps show fore and aft views at the same time in flight or racing sims. It does mean you'll need an extra monitor, of course, but what's a few hundred quid to a Microsoft developer?

IN CONCLUSION

Windows 98 is an improvement on Windows 95. If all the new utilities work as Microsoft intend, you should have a more efficient system and one that's less likely to fall over. The Internet integration which has been the subject of so much controversy in the US is a logical extension to an operating system on home PCs. Most of us now use the Internet – or intend to – so building transparent access into the core of Windows is a logical extension of the operating system.

All that remains to consider is the price, which is high when you think about how many of the 'new' additions have been available free to download. In my opinion, then, £50 would be nearer the mark for the improvements offered here. PCG

HELP!

ABORT, RETRY, FAIL...

Technical queries, hardware advice or words of wisdom on widgets – all your beardy questions are answered here.

When Abort, Retry, Fail was sliced off in its prime some ten months ago, we were deluged with literally tens of complaints. As a result, the editor, like Copernicus and Galileo before him, has publicly recanted this heresy and denounced the error of his past ways.

So, you have it back, and I'm only too happy to receive your pitiful cries for help – please send them in by the sackful and keep Systems at its new zestful size. Here are a few left-over answers from before the fall.

Q:> I want a good video accelerator for games, but can't afford the £150-plus asked for Voodoo2 cards. Are there any other options available?

John Dempsey, Buckingham

A:> *If you want a full Voodoo2 card you will have to pay around £165, from places like Software Warehouse (01675 466467), but you can pick up the original Voodoo cards, which will still give you a fair degree of acceleration, for around half this price. Videologic's rival Apocalypse accelerators start at around £50 and although they don't have the following 3Dfx has, there are still plenty of games which support it. If you can wait a couple of months, S3's Savage 3D chipset promises great things and they're talking about a complete 2D/3D graphics card for around half the price of Voodoo2.*

Q:> I have an 8Mb, 486DX4/100 and £600 to spend on it. What's the best way to get better performance out of this combination. Should I spend the money on memory and video card, processor or video accelerator?

Chris Smith, Derby

A:> *Yes. Spend it on all of them, or better still sell the machine (try Micro Mart, who offer free private ads) – you should be able to get £200-£300 for it, if it's in good working order – and buy afresh. For £800, you can get a fast Pentium MMX, with a good sized hard drive and plenty of memory. You might not be able to run to a graphics accelerator at that price, but you'd be better off starting from scratch with a new PC than trying to upgrade your 486 piecemeal.*

Q:> I'm putting together a 350MHz Pentium II system bit by bit as I can afford the components. I've got to the memory and my friend says I have to buy 100MHz DIMMs, but these are a lot more expensive. Can I use the 66MHz DIMMs instead?

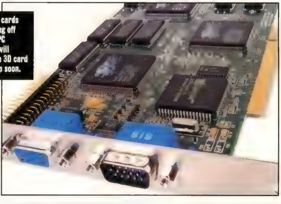
Ajwad Patel, Bradford

A:> *Your friend is right. With 350MHz and 400MHz Pentium IIs, which run with an upgraded 100MHz bus, you will need faster memory or the machine will either fail to start or fall over pretty regularly. You have to bite the bullet, I'm afraid, and buy yourself the faster memory. By the way, slower Pentium IIs, which used the older LX chipset and a 66MHz bus, are quite happy with 66MHz DIMMs.*

Q:> When I try out games and programs off cover CDs, I'm never sure that all the fragments of them are removed when I uninstall the ones I don't want. Do I have to rely on the uninstall routines that come on the CDs, some of which (not yours, I hasten to add) look rather hurriedly put together?

Russell Hobson, Torquay

A:> *Keeping Windows clean, and, in particular, keeping its registry up to scratch, is something of a black art. A program I've found very useful in this respect is Power Cleaner, from Data Becker – ask your dealer to get it for you. This program monitors your installation while you install new software and can then remove it again when you've finished. It checks the links between files too, so that it doesn't remove shared files used by other programs.*



Voodoo2 cards are taking off slowly. PC GAMER will feature a 3D card round-up soon.

Although you still have to have a phone link to send requests for particular Internet sites, the download comes directly from the satellite and the transfer should be almost instantaneous. To speed even this nifty process up a bit, the 20 or so most common Internet sites will be continuously transmitted down to earth, so information from these sites doesn't even have to be requested – the satellite receiver card that you fit to your PC simply tunes into the appropriate channel and down pours all the data.

An added advantage of the system is that the Hot Bird satellite and Sky's TV satellite are close enough together in the heavens that you can use a single aerial for both systems. This service is currently undergoing field trials, but should be operational before the end of the year. More information on this when I've tried it out.

PCI sound card

Aztech are one of the first hardware suppliers to release a PCI-based sound card that is targetted specifically at 'serious gamers'. The 338-A3D is an oddly shaped card which offers 64 channel wave-table synthesis, like Creative's AWE 64, and Aureal's A3D positional sound effects. This technology is interesting because it claims to be able to put specific sounds into an audio surround sound stage, which doesn't require you to sit rigidly with your head clamped in order to appreciate the effect. Unlike Dolby Pro Logic and Digital, you don't need five speakers, either. The card should be generally available from PC and games dealers for around £50.

Motorola jump ship

Another satellite service snippet, this time about two of the services described last month. The Teledesic constellation – backed by both Microsoft and Boeing – has received a boost from Motorola who have decided to abandon the Celestri Constellation, and instead become a prime contractor for Teledesic. This will save Motorola a lot of money and makes Teledesic favourite to be the prime Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite service soon after the Millennium.

THE MONEY

Your disposable income disposed of.

PER4MER TURBO WHEEL

SC&T, 01705 200700

£50

PRICED for the more conservative buyer, the Turbo Wheel is SC&T's concession to the budget end of the market. As such, the rather rigid and lightweight plastic it's constructed from betrays its intentions with alacrity; a well-heeled shoe would decimate it with a firm stomp, and its resistance to the punishing torque of a high speed race appears highly suspect.

Saying that, however, the pedal action is commendably smooth, with an unobtrusive, but effective, amount of 'spring'. Just try to be gentle.

Back at the wheel, however, things become problematic once more. The turning radius is pitifully small, which makes for easier cornering, but in no way gives the feeling of physicality a true wheel should, and it realigns itself with some force. The buttons, of which there are few, are suitably responsive, apart from those on the dash, which are horribly vague. Fair enough for the price, but save your pennies for something classier.

54%

ULTIMATE PER4MER RACING WHEEL

SC&T, 01705 200700

£75

SC&T'S mid-range offering still retains the cheapo plastic flavour of its wallet-friendly sibling, but is thankfully sturdier and a whole lot chunkier. Someone went madly overboard in the embellishment department, however, as the whole thing is festooned with a plethora of unsightly neon decals featuring far more fake dials than is *entirely* necessary.

Steering action is pleasant enough, utilising almost the whole radius of the wheel, and the alignment notch presents itself without bellicosity and with decorum. The pedals are exactly the same as the force feedback version's, which is a good thing as they're none too shabby.

Also like its bigger brother, it comes complete with brackets and rubber suckers to affix it firmly to the desk. Although such a feature is of far more import to the wobbly version, the Per4mer's, er, performance is increased tenfold when stable. Unexceptional, then, but a fine middle-of-the-road choice.

80%

PER4MER FORCE FEEDBACK

SC&T, 01705 200700

£150

THE force feedback version of the Ultimate Per4mer may seem to be horribly expensive – and it is – but the results almost justify the means. The wheel and dash are necessarily heavier than the unaugmented version, thanks to the wobble-making machinery squirrelled away inside, which gives a most convincing feel of solidity. The pedals are fluid and sturdy, able to cope with the most club-footed of imbeciles, and they even tilt backwards slightly for heel-led control.

But it's the rumbling of this beast that must justify that price tag. And the verdict? Fantastic. It's like arm-wrestling a rabid Norseman after you've insulted his beard. Scoot across some grass and the whole kaboodle shakes with vehemence and brutality – frankly, it's terrifying.

Steering, however, is rather stiff and rigid, but SC&T have even bunged in full versions of *Daytona USA Deluxe* and *Sega Rally*. Pricey, then, but fun.

86%

PIT

HOW WE REVIEWED EACH PRODUCT

Steering wheels, by necessity, are meant for driving games. Specifically, driving games where you drive cars, rather than planes, boats or monstrously enlarged insects. So, bearing this criteria in mind, we rigorously tested each piece of wheely kit via the medium of Sega's *Daytona USA Deluxe*. In general, the standard of the products' performance and ability to deal with our rough-shod automobile abuse were the two main qualities we looked for. Enjoy.

The Grand Prix's not over yet, and so, as the tide of football that has already swallowed the summer threatens to engulf us all, we turn our attentions to speedier accessories.

By JES BICKHAM

F1 SIM RACING SIMULATOR

Digital Edge, 01293 538666

£160

WE originally reviewed this in issue 52's Money Pit, where it was crowned the king of the world. As far as steering wheels are concerned, anyway.

And now, how has this mighty champion fared with the passage of time? Mighty fine, as it happens. The whole shebang still reeks of fine pedigree, with a perfectly – and we mean perfectly – weighted wheel that turns like an oiled angel. The leather padding adds to the authentic feeling immeasurably, and the hefty, spring-loaded, metal pedals are a dream. The board that slips under your monitor – to which the metal steering column attaches – is still a fantastically simple innovation, adding comfort and stability to an already world-class package. The gear-change paddles and minimalist two buttons round off this most sylph-like of turning triumphs.

There's a force feedback version due out in time for Christmas but for now this is the best (and most expensive) there is.

90%

F1 SIM COMPACT

Digital Edge, 01293 538666

£80

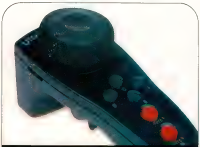
THIS is a curious one. The F1 Sim Compact is a more affordable version of the all-conquering F1 Sim Racing Simulator, and as such it falls between two stools, being a curious hybrid of true quality and budget necessity.

The wheel and racing column bear favourable comparison with its bigger brother, being cut from the very same sturdy metal cloth, complete with paddles and smooth-as-silk turning action. The leather stylings, however, have been replaced with rather disappointing blue plastic and a curious C-shaped wheel. You'll also have to provide your own boards to fix the wheel to, which is oddly baffling.

The pedals, though, are horrible, consisting of two naff plastic switches embedded in an equally naff, and featherlight, plastic base. Yeuch.

Still, you're essentially getting the quality performance of the Simulator wheel for half the price which, really, can't be sniffed at. Can it now?

83%



ULTRARACER PC

InterAct, (44) 1204 700139

£20

NOT specifically a steering wheel, this, but more of a joypad designed for driving games. The small, pleasantly foam-ringed wheel is nicely responsive and capable of precision turning, and all at the touch of your fingertips. The real star, though, is the throttle trigger situated on the underside of the pad; capable of two-way action, it can be used both for acceleration and braking. A very nice touch, indeed.

Four well-placed buttons and X/Y axis trim controls round off a surprisingly well-balanced and effective package. Should you not have the money to blow on a fully fledged steering wheel (or have a desk big enough to accommodate one), this little gem will give you far more control than mere keys or a simple joystick. Its usefulness for other game genres, however, is questionable, and its N64 origins are all too apparent in the clumsily filled-in Memory Pak slot at the head of the ensemble. Doh.

85%

WIN!

A PENTIUM 233 WITH 3D CARD

SUMMER'S here, and we should be outside, frolicking in the fresh air, endangering our alabaster complexions by allowing God's good sunlight to fall across our Roman profiles. And yet we're not. Why? Because the lure of the computer game is a vast and all-consuming addiction. Indeed, so pervasive are the charms of the games we play that we truly expect Lynda La Plante to fictionalise this Bottomless Evil in a drama series called Meddling Micro Machines Murderousness Made Me Mental.

Believe it

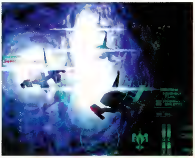
But we love games. When they're good, they're great. And when they're great, well . . social life, as we know it, ceases to exist Interplay's latest twist on the *Descent* series, *Conflict: Freespace*, has been one such game this month, saturating our keyboards with even more saliva than usual (expect a full review next month). Upon hearing of our dribbling spasms, Interplay sent urgent messages babbling incoherently of "grey boxes of wire and plastic that go beep". Several hours later, we managed to decipher this cryptic missive. And good lord! It appears that they've got a PC up for grabs. Not just any PC, mind you, but a P233 with a 3D card, which is not to be sniffed at. And so Interplay have deigned to offer a lucky person this most splendid gift through the medium of this august journal. Read on to discover how it could be you

QUESTION

The "Last line of defence" contest

Can you design a spaceship? In NASA, are you, then?

Conflict: Freespace is all about spaceships shooting each other till death. It is therefore Science Fiction, and Science Fiction has become a font for entertainment of all types of media. Literature, movies, art and, of course, computer games are informed hugely by this most fecund of genres. Classically speaking, it was originally used as a device to explore the 'what-ifs' of modern society. HG Wells had a field day tut-tutting at the extremes of medical experimentation in The Island of Dr Moreau and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein ploughed much the same furrow. (We just tut-tutted at the appaling movie versions of said books.)



But, more often than not, Sci-Fi is now an excuse for nasty aliens to be shot with very large guns. And fair enough, we say. We all need a bit of pure escapism every now and then. Look at the impact Star Wars had on our society. It was the oldest of stories, featuring the young hero, the wise old man, an imprisoned princess and the evil king, all dressed up in some spacey whizz-bang finery. Great.

Which brings us to what we want you to do. Imagine that slimy be-tentacled aliens are marauding through the universe, shooting things, ravishing entire worlds and stealing a whole load of lemon bonbons from some very upset children. What to do? Well, design and construct a fabulously destructive spaceship, for a start. Then take it out and show the aliens just what to do with their anal probes and fat American vivisection programme. So, yes, we want you to design your own kick-bum spaceship, complete with devastating weaponry and special extras, such as huge mechanical claws or inflatable decoy ships. Perhaps. Anyway, it's got to be an original design – no cribbing from the distinctive styles of Star Trek, Star Wars or Babylon 5 – and the more interesting the better. So, no simple rockets with huge space cannons plonked on the front. Scribble it down on a piece of paper, describe all the guns and extra gubbins, and send it to us forthwith. The use of colour pencils/pastels/paints is positively encouraged, as we like pretty things here at the U.S.S GAMER, and hey, you do want to win, don't you?

Send this coupon to: The "Last line of defence" Contest, PC GAMER, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2DL, to arrive by 30th September.

My spaceship will win the war. Should this be so, it is pre-programmed to fly my prize to:

Name ____________________

Address ____________________

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My most wanted

This bit's optional, but we'd like you to let us know the five forthcoming PC games you're most looking forward to, to aid us in compiling our Readers Most Wanted chart.

1 ____________________

2 ____________________

3 ____________________

4 ____________________

5 ____________________

RULES

1. Future Publishing and Interplay robots aren't the droids we're looking for.
2. Entries arriving after 30th September will find themselves floating home.
3. Multiple entries will be abandoned in our moment of triumph.
4. The Editor's word is law. Cross him and you'll find yourself waking up in a hotel room where no-one will be able to hear you scream.

233

24X
Titan
DAYTEK

Shiny thing, ooh, lovely shiny new thing. Let it be mine, *mine*, ***MINE.*** A-ha-ha-ha!

This Pentium P233 with 3D card will be landing on your desk if we like the cut of your spaceship's jib. So, get... erm... cutting.

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CD review
CD review
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+ size matters: pcs great and small
+ keep your pc cool this summer
+ the amd k6-2 chip - great for 3d!

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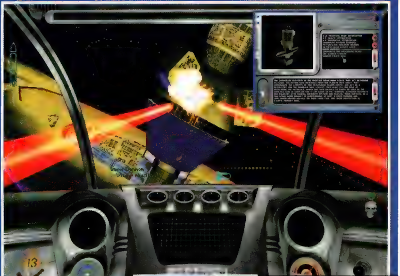
CDGAMER

It received the coveted 'Game of the Month' award last month and you can all now sample the complexities of *X-COM: Interceptor* in our playable demo. But don't miss our E3 special on CD GAMER 2.

DEMO OF THE MONTH



You could shoot 'em in the legs to stop them walking, but we reckon the head shot's a lot more fun.

X-COM: INTERCEPTOR

MICROPROSE

Pentium 166, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95

Playable demo featuring a 'tour' of the strategy screens from the full game plus a chance to sample the new 3D space combat engine.

FLIGHT CONTROLS:

Up arrow – Dive (nose down)
Down arrow – Climb (nose up)
Left arrow – Bank left
Right arrow – Bank right
NumPad 7 – Roll left
NumPad 9 – Roll right
+ – Increase throttle (10% increments)
- – Decrease throttle
Z – Toggle reverse throttle
Backspace – Maximum throttle
\ – Zero throttle
Tab – Afterburners (hold)
H – Hyperspace (End mission)

TARGETING AND WEAPON CONTROLS:

T – Select next target
Y – Select previous target
R – Select closest enemy target
G – Select target currently in sights
Enter/Return – Fire beams
Space – Fire missile
X – Link beams/full beams/unlink beams (toggle)
> – Next MFD mode
< – Previous MFD mode

POWER MANAGEMENT:

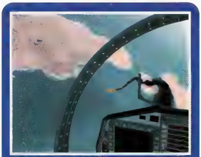
F9 – Toggle beam weapon charge rate
F10 – Toggle shield charge rate
S – Toggle shield balance (equal/full forward/full aft)
; – Transfer power from weapons to shields
– Transfer power from shields to weapons

MISCELLANEOUS CONTROLS:

P – Pause
ESC – Default MFD Mode
ALT+Q – Quit Demo

COCKPIT VIEW CONTROLS:

F1 – Cockpit forward
F2 – Full forward
F3 – Cockpit left
F4 – Cockpit right
F5 – Cockpit left-rear
F6 – Cockpit right-rear
F7 – Chase ViewGame demos



JANE'S F-15

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Pentium 166, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95, joystick

Sample this specially created demo mission of *Jane's F-15* that offers a wide range of target types and scenery features. Unfortunately the installation program does not create a program launch icon, therefore you should point Windows Explorer at the C:\JANES\F15DEMO directory and run the file called F15DEMO.EXE.

CONTROLS:

Joystick – Directional control
- – Decrease throttle
+ – Increase throttle
F1 – Forward cockpit view
F2 – Look down MPD view
F3 – WSO forward view
F4 – Virtual cockpit view
F5 – Left cockpit view
F6 – Right cockpit view
T – Next target
Spacebar – Change weapon
A – Autopilot
Z – Zoom displays
X – Expand displays
P – Pause simulation

If you're a tank, this is one sight you really don't want to see.

TEAM APACHE

MINDSCAPE

Pentium 166, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95

You can read the review of Team Apache elsewhere in this issue, but you may like to jump straight into an Apache attack helicopter and experience it for yourself. The demo features a fully playable mission to repel the Russian ground and air forces that are advancing on your base. We've listed the important keyboard commands for you here but we strongly recommend a joystick to attain the full 'experience'.

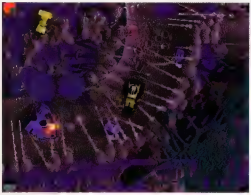
CONTROLS:

Quick Start: Press E to start the engines, set your throttle to high and watch the Apache lift off.

< – Yaw left
> – Yaw right
+ – Increase throttle (only works if your joystick doesn't have a throttle)
- – Decrease throttle (only works if your joystick doesn't have a throttle)
E – Start engines command
Ctrl+E – Toggle engines when on the ground
A – Turn on autopilot
H – Turn on autohover
Tab – Turn off autopilot or autohover
L+Ctrl – Toggle wing lights
Z – Emergency hydraulics (lasts for ten seconds)

WEAPON CONTROLS:

M – Arm all weapons
G – Switch between LOAL and LOBL firing modes for Hellfire
Space – Fire weapon (also fire on joystick)
Bspace – Toggle weapons (also secondary joystick button)
J – Increases the burst limit of your current weapon
K – Decreases the burst limit of your current weapon
U – Store the ground coordinates of what is in your gunsight
Shift+U – Order artillery attack at stored coordinates
Insert – Co-pilot gunner cycle to next target



MECH COMMANDER

MICROPROSE

Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95

Just some scenes you can expect to see while playing the *Mech Commander* demo.

Fully playable demo of *MechCommander* featuring two missions and the huge opening cinematic sequence from the full game. Control is mainly handled in a standard *C&C* fashion with the mouse, but we've listed some important keyboard shortcuts for you below. The installation requires a massive 200Mb of hard disk space (sorry about that!), and the CD must be present in the drive at all times.

CONTROLS:

Left-mouse click or drag box – Select a unit
Drag box or select appropriate Function key – Select a group of units
[e] – Select all units on screen
[Shift] + left-mouse click – Deselect a unit
Right-mouse click – Deselect all units
Left-mouse click on the destination – Move
[Spacebar] + left-mouse click – Run
[j] + left-mouse click (jump-capable Mechs only; limited distance) – Jump
[Backspace] – Stop/hold fire/cancel artillery selection
[Esc] – Pause
[Page Down] – Power down
[Page Up] – Power up
[Home] + left-mouse click on the Mech – Eject
Mouse-down or [Down Arrow] – Scroll battlefield view down
Mouse-left or [Left Arrow] – Scroll battlefield view left
Mouse-right or [Right Arrow] – Scroll battlefield view right
Mouse-up or [Up Arrow] – Scroll battlefield view up
[+] – Zoom battlefield view in
[–] – Zoom battlefield view out

THE WINDOWS 95 MENU

Insert the CD-ROM into your drive and the CD GAMER menu program will 'autorun' (so long as you have this Windows 95 feature enabled) and after a few seconds you will be presented with an introduction screen. You are then invited to 'Run the menu'. Selecting this option will launch the CD GAMER menu program. From here you can install this month's selection of game demos and access the reviews database and guidelines sections.

EXPLORE THE CD

This will launch the Windows 95 Explorer window so that you can choose which demos to install yourself. An alternative to the CD GAMER menu program for more experienced users.

GAME OF THE MONTH

Click here to go straight to the game of the month.

RETURN TO WINDOWS

If, for some reason, the menu program does not automatically start, perhaps the autorun feature is disabled on your system. Go to the START/RUN command on the taskbar and type D:\PCG.EXE (where D is the letter of your CD-ROM drive).

THE WINDOWS 3.1 MENU

To start the Windows 3.1 menu select Run from the File menu in Program Manager. Next, enter the letter of your CD-ROM drive followed by :\PCG.EXE and then press return. After a short delay, the CD GAMER menu program will appear and you will then have access to the extensive reviews and guidelines databases plus any game demos that are suitable for the Windows 3.1 operating system.

THE DOS MENU

To access the MS-DOS menu you are advised to leave Windows completely to the DOS environment and you should then switch to the CD-ROM drive (by typing CD D:\). Then type GO followed by return to start the menu program.

GOT A PROBLEM?

If your CD is defective, please return it to the address below. Please make sure you have followed our installation procedures correctly before you send it back to us to ensure that there is a physical problem. Please send the CD along with a description of the fault plus a self addressed envelope. Return postage will be paid.

PC GAMER CD Returns
Disctronics, Southwater Business Park, Worthing Road, Southwater, West Sussex, RH13 7YT

A CD should only need replacing if the CD itself cannot be read. If, instead, you are experiencing problems with an individual demo or application, phone the number below and ask for our technical support line. This is open between 9.30am and 6pm from Monday to Friday.

Tel 01225 442244 (Ask for Technical Support)
Fax 01225 732279
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Please note that the help-line staff provide assistance with technical problems directly related to our cover CD and cannot provide training on software or hardware in general.

● The PC GAMER CD-ROMs have been thoroughly tested at all stages of production and declared 'virus free' by an independent organisation. We recommend that you always run a virus checker on ANY software before running it. Future Publishing Ltd cannot accept any responsibility for disruption, damage and/or loss to your data or your computer system which may occur while using these CD-ROMs, the programs or the data on them. Ensure that you have up-to-date backups of data contained on your hard drives before running any new software.

Playing with marines has never been so much fun...

Delete – Co-pilot gunner fixed to current target
C – Dispense chaff
F – Dispense flares
Esc – End mission
P – Pause the game

CAMERA CONTROLS:
F1 – HUD View
F2 – Cycle cockpit when in HUD view
F3 – Floating camera
F4 – Wing view camera (Cycles between sides)
F5 – Rotating and zooming camera
F6 – Drop controllable camera
F7 – Drop camera that follows you
F8 – Friendly camera view
F9 – Enemy camera view
F11 – Missile chase view
F12 – In-flight map

VANGERS
INTERACTIVE MAGIC
Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95

Playable demo of *Vangers* featuring the Fostral world from the full game.

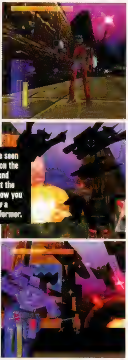
CONTROLS:
Numpad 4/6 – Turn left/right
Numpad 8/5 – Forward/back
Numpad 7/9 – Device up/down (if available)
Numpad 1/3 – Left/right turnover
Shift – Accelerate
C – Handbrake
Enter – Inventory screen on/off
1 through 4 – Fire available weapon no.
Ctrl – Fire all active weapons at once
Tab – Change current target
Esc – Pause/access options

COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES
EIDOS
Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95

Two playable missions from *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines.* You control your troops using standard *C&C* mouse clicks and then order them to carry out specific tasks using the icons at the bottom right of the screen. Various display options are available to suit almost any PC configuration.

ARES RISING
IMAGINE STUDIOS
Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95

An early playable demo of this new space shooter. There's a very



You've seen them on the telly and bought the toy. Now you can *be* a Transformer.

detailed document within the installation directory which fully explains the features available in the demo, but we've listed the essential keyboard commands for you here.

CONTROLS:
Arrow keys – Directional controls
-/+ – Throttle up/down
Spacebar – Fire 1
Ctrl – Fire 2
Alt – Fire 3
Caps Lock – Fire 4
Tab – Afterburner
,/. – Roll left/right
Shift & E – Eject
Esc – Options

BEAST WARS

HASBRO INTERACTIVE

Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Windows 95

Playable demo of Beast Wars, a new third-person shooter, featuring a desert mission. The installation process does not create an icon for the game, therefore you should run the following file through Windows Explorer: C:\BEASTWARS\BWDEMO.EXE.

CONTROLS:
Arrow keys – Directional control
Z/X – Strafe left/right
Spacebar – Fire
Alt – Transform
Ctrl – Jump
Esc – Quit

CD GAMER 2

Don't try this at home, kids, jumping over grates is not advised.

This is *Beneath*, just one of the new games on display from Activision.

This month we've dedicated the second CD to all things E3, that's the Electronic Entertainment Expo that was held in Atlanta during the final few days of May. There were literally hundreds of titles on display, with all the major game publishers represented, and we have spent many hours filtering through the good and the bad to bring you the definitive E3 coverage on a single CD. For starters, may we point your attention towards the video footage of *C&C: Tiberian Sun* and *Force Commander*. These two real-time strategy monsters are looking set to do battle for your money later this year. It's difficult to say which one is looking better at the moment and you may like to study the screenshots we've included of both and maybe compare them to the *Total Annihilation 2: Kingdoms* screenies that you'll also find elsewhere on the disc.

In addition, we've tried to bring you the best previews of the major 3D releases planned for this year. There's an impressive video and stunning new screenshots of *Half-Life* on display, a first look at *Turok 2* and *Aliens vs Predator*, plus new grabs from *Daikatana*, *Sin* and *Prey*. *Aliens vs Predator* is looking particularly good and our still collection and video should really whet your appetite.

LucasArts were in fine form too, not just content with showing off *Force Commander*, they also blew us away with new shots from *Grim Fandango* and the mind-blowing *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine*. Check them out.

Eidos, unsurprisingly, have wheeled out the Lara Croft money-making machine again and showed off *Tomb Raider III*, and we have the first in-game shots available for your adoring eyes. Gremlin too, had a good show with the software engine of *Blade* making everyone weep with its stunning visuals, just take a look at the video we acquired for you.

There was one real show stopper in the 3D genre, though: Infogrames' *Outcast* is looking unbelievably fine, so make sure you have an oxygen tank on stand-by before playing the gorgeous video we managed to prise from their collective grip.

There are many, many more titles to mention and you will find them all, more than 130 of them, lying gracefully with the confines of CD GAMER 2. No other mag brings you so much, so early.

MAIL US!

As always, we are interested to receive feedback from you concerning our cover CDs and if you have any comments or suggestions for future discs then please contact our resident CD-ROM editor – Trevor Witt by e-mail on tfwitt@futurenet.co.uk or at the usual postal address.

Spring has departed unthanked, like someone leaving early but unnoticed from their own farewell party. As sunshine shafts the streets with increasing fervour, we find ourselves in summer. Flesh is bared, pubs invade pavements and all music is upbeat.

And where, we wonder, does that leave the PC gamer? Gaunt and sallow, fighting his way sweatily to the last level of *Deathtrap Dungeon* with the curtains drawn, while his erstwhile chums (so keen, in winter, to feast at his gaming table) frolic in the ultraviolet? Or sat by some swimming pool, teeth clenched, fingers tapping instinctively on the poolside tiles, striving to silence his addicted body's gaming cravings?

Well, ask this question of an Outdoor Gamers Club member, and their reply will come swift and sure.

"Ah-ha!" they will say to you. "I'm glad you asked me that. We at the Outdoor Gamers Club" - and here they will put their arms jovially (but firmly) around nearby fellow members, should any be present - "believe that you can have your cake and eat it. And play games with it. And have my cake, too, for that matter. Well, a bit of it."

We recently visited the Weston-Super-Mare chapter of the Outdoor Gamers Club, and were mightily impressed with what we found. No longer, it seems, need summer bring social ridicule for the serious games player.

"The whole thing began one hot summer afternoon last year," explained Club President Andy Mountbatten, to anyone who'd listen. "Me and my friend Habbakuk were playing *Quake* indoors, having linked together our two PCs with a serial cable as we do every afternoon, except Wednesdays, which are sacred to our Lord Beelzebub.

"In a sudden fit of rage at a particularly unfair fragging," he continued, "I heaved my computer through the window behind me, where it landed on the lawn, miraculously undamaged. The power and serial cables were still connected - the game still seemed playable. So I threw myself after it, and managed to continue playing on the lawn for a glorious fifteen minutes or so, before the injuries I had sustained jumping through a second-storey window overwhelmed me and I lapsed, regrettably, into a deep coma. When I awoke earlier this year, it occurred to me that gaming outside was an excellent idea, and should be encouraged. Only without the window-jumping aspect."

Mountbatten's idea spread like fire, and soon become more popular than air. Today there are some 475,000 Outdoor Gamers Club members worldwide, almost all of them in Weston-Super-Mare. The day of our visit was bright and warm, so the Club President took us down to the seafront.

There, as far as the head could see, the beach thronged with *Quake*-players. They tended to gather in groups of eight, we noticed, with cables linking their computers in a circular network. Each group of players had erected a brightly coloured windbreaker to separate them from nearby circles. Diesel fumes hung heavy above the many generators noisily pumping electricity up and down the waterfront, but the frequent sea breezes tended to break up the more noxious clouds. Every now and then someone would kick sand at someone else's screen.

"*Quake* on the beach!" cried Mountbatten. "Have you ever seen such a glorious sight?"

And we hadn't.

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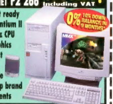

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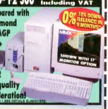
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